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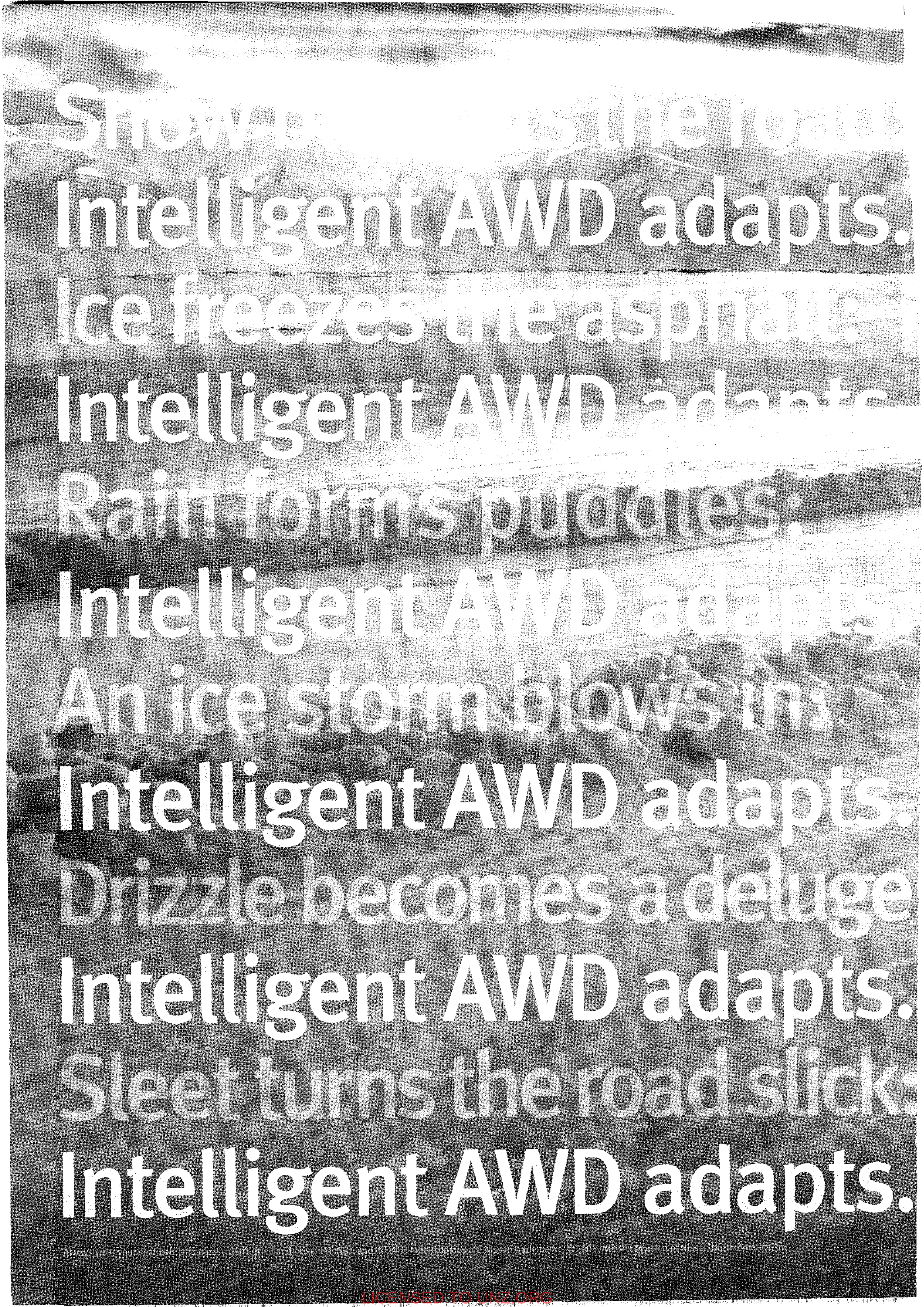
THE NEW YORKER

JAN. 9, 2006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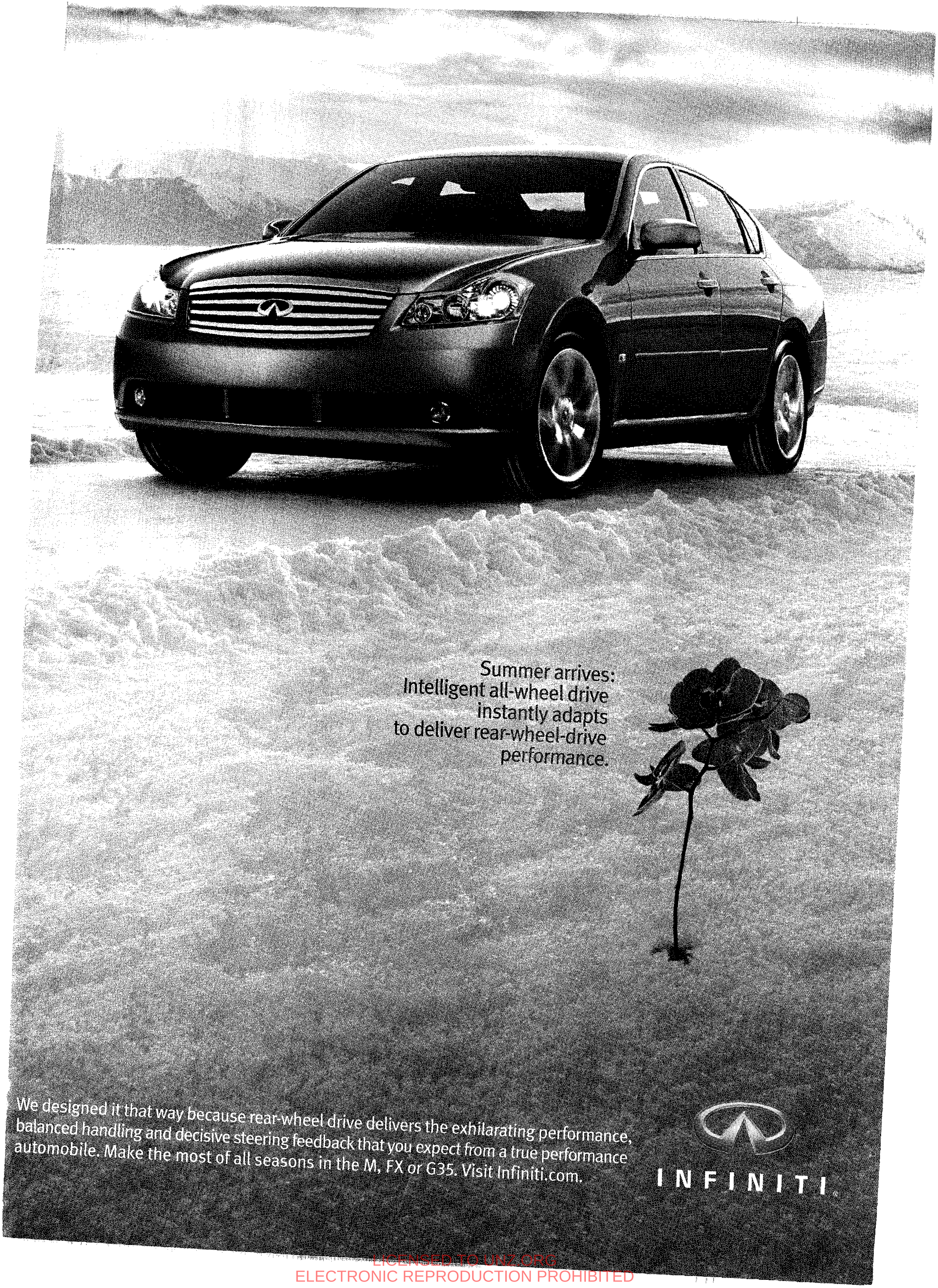

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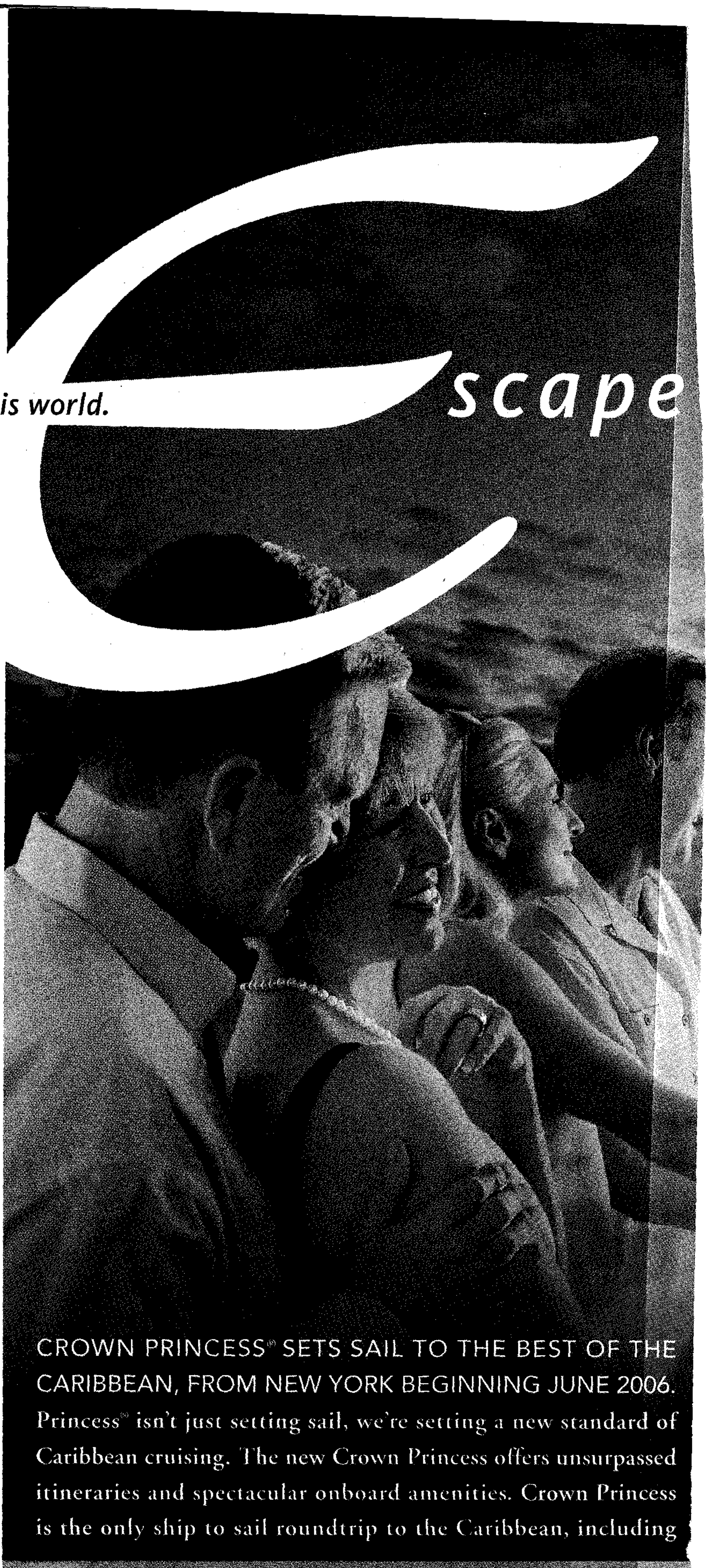

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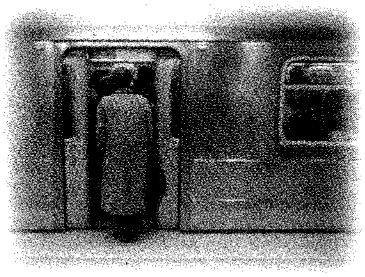

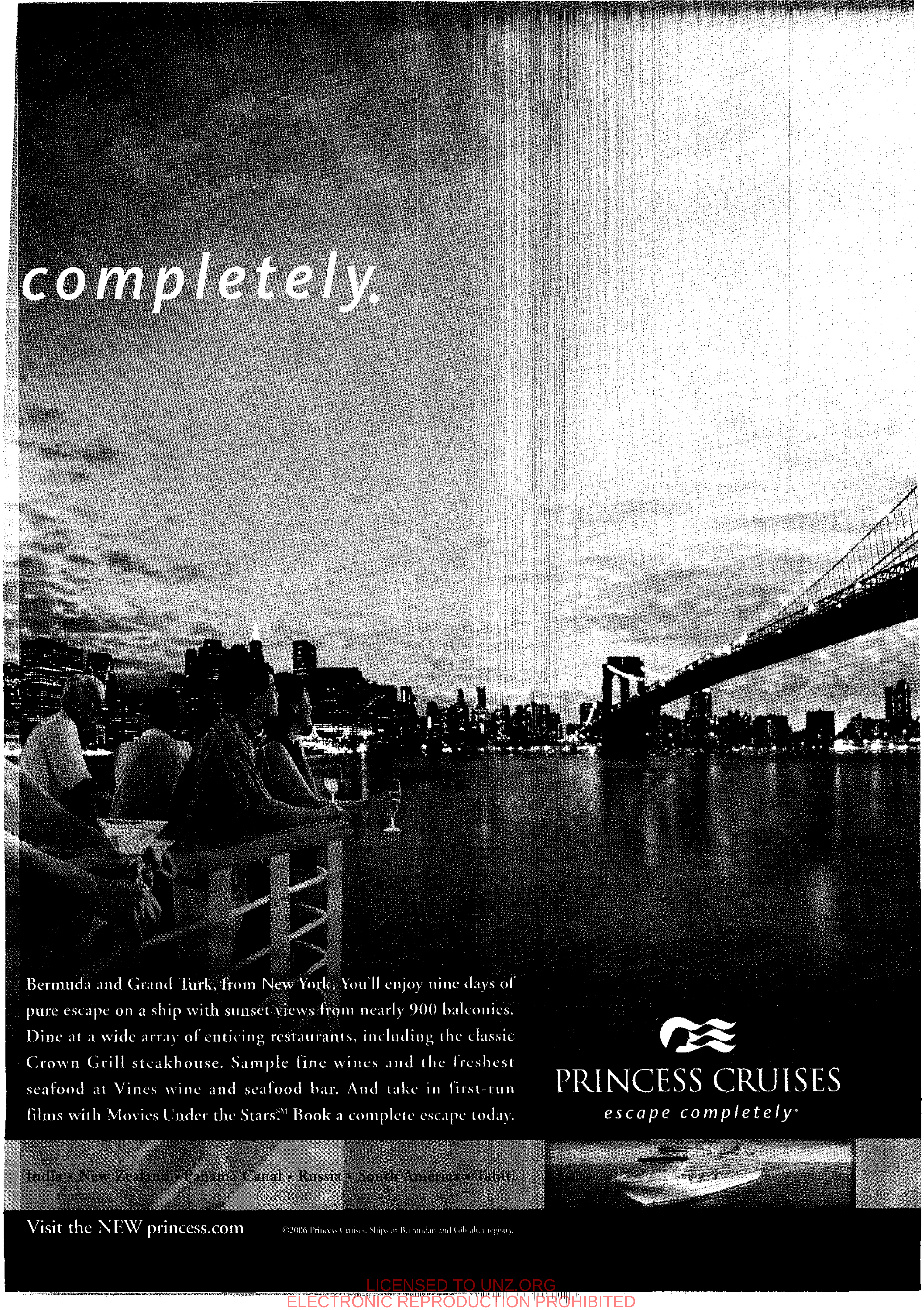

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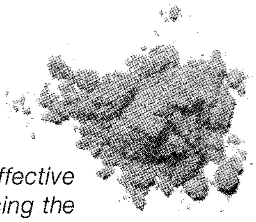

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THIS WEEK'S WEB EXCLUSIVE:

Robert Polidori talks about photographing New Orleans after Katrina, with an extended portfolio of images.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Elizabeth Kolbert ("Butterfly Lessons," p. 32) has a book about global warming, "Field Notes from a Catastrophe," coming out in March.

Burkhard Bilger ("The Power of Hair," p. 43), a staff writer, is the author of "Noodling for Flatheads."

Lillian Ross (The Talk of the Town, p. 28) is a longtime staff member.

Robert Polidori ("The Waste Land," p. 64) has published several books of photographs, including "Robert Polidori's Metropolis." To view an expanded version of his New Orleans portfolio, "The Waste Land," visit the magazine's Web site at www.newyorker.com.

Roger Angell (Comment, p. 25) has been a contributor since 1944. His new book, "Let Me Finish," will be published in May.

Peter Schjeldahl (The Art World, p. 88) is the magazine's art critic.

Dan Baum ("Deluged," p. 50) is a staff writer.

Tony Earley (Fiction, p. 74) is an associate professor of English at Vanderbilt University. He has written three books, including "Jim the Boy," a novel.

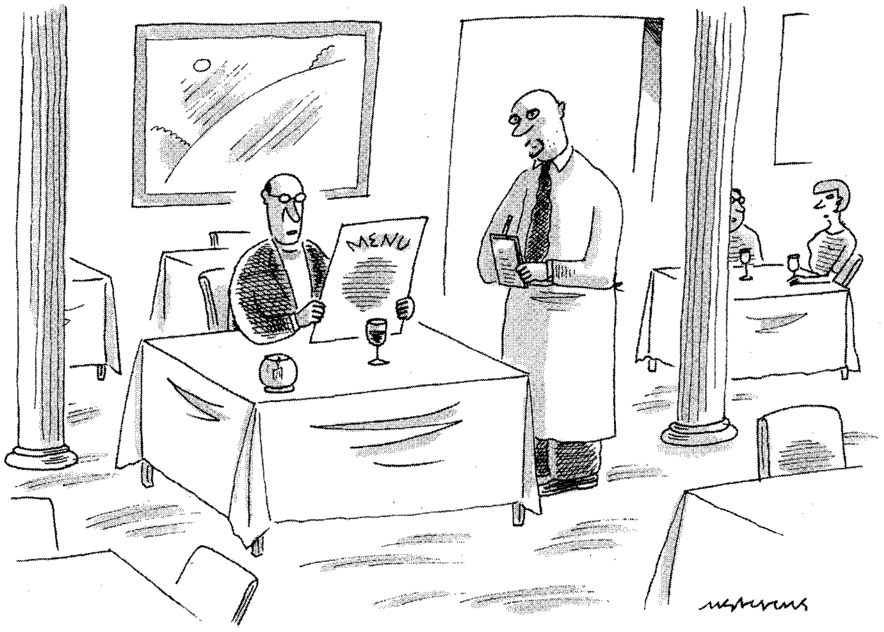
Nick Paumgarten (The Talk of the Town, p. 30) is a staff writer.

David Denby (Books, p. 82; The Current Cinema, p. 91) is a film critic for the magazine. He is the author of "Great Books" and "American Sucker."

Frank Bidart (Poem, p. 56) has published six collections of poems, including, most recently, "Star Dust."

Kate Julian (The Talk of the Town, p. 29) is a member of the magazine's editorial staff.

Kim DeMarco (Cover) is currently at work on illustrations for a children's book, "The Little Punk." ♦



"I'll have the chicken Tamiflu."

THE MAIL

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Ben McGrath, in his piece on the new Darwin exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History, describes our natural-selection simulation, "Nowhere to Hide" (The Talk of the Town, November 21st). In the simulation, orange bugs and green bugs gambol about (and occasionally reproduce) on a leafy background, and hungry birds pop in and eat the bugs that are easiest to spot. McGrath points out that no matter how you change the background color one bug always remains uneaten. There's a simple explanation: the exhibit must run for at least another four years. If the last bug were to be eaten, the bugs would, of course, become extinct and future museumgoers would have to look at a blank screen. So we set the probability of the last bug being seen and eaten by the birds to "0." That way, there's always one bug to carry on the line, and the simulation can continue to run indefinitely.

Bob Hirshon
Senior Project Director, Kinetic City Project, American Association for the Advancement of Science
Washington, D.C.

MIGRATING POPULATIONS

Jane Kramer, in comparing the assimilation "models" of European countries and the United States, favors the American one (Comment, November 21st). Fair enough, but a more realistic assessment of the American model might include the people abandoned in New Orleans, the rioters in South Central Los Angeles, and the burgeoning population in our prison system. These could be considered our unassimilated immigrants, and they are a reminder that we are not doing very well.

J. D. Shuchter
State College, Pa.

Kramer writes, "Since the end of the Second World War, Western Europe has been at the center of a labor migration that, in its proportions, rivals the great forced migrations of the Roman Empire." However, as the English historian Susan Reynolds put the matter succinctly two decades ago, "We have very little evidence at all, outside stories that were told and elaborated after the sixth century, that a larger proportion of the population of Europe moved around during the 'Age of Migration' than at any other time." These migrations are barely even mentioned in Aaron Segal's "An Atlas of International Migration." Segal's neglect is probably undeserved, but it does show that the "Migration Age" of late antiquity was not so vast and momentous as to force a historian of migrations to pay attention to it.

Walter Goffart
Professor Emeritus of History
University of Toronto
New Haven, Conn.

THE DRESDEN ATTACK

Peter Schjeldahl, in discussing Gerhard Richter's photograph "Mustangs," refers to the "murderous role" that Mustang fighter planes played in the 1945 attack on Dresden, "strafing survivors of the initial bombing who were massed on the city's riverbanks" (The Art World, December 5th). However, Frederick Taylor, in his book "Dresden," carefully reviews all the evidence and, in agreement with the German historian Helmut Schnatz, concludes that such strafing could not have occurred. War in general is a murderous business, but the strafing of Dresden survivors by Allied planes is one terrible incident that seemingly did not take place.

Jeff Tonn
Tacoma, Wash.

•

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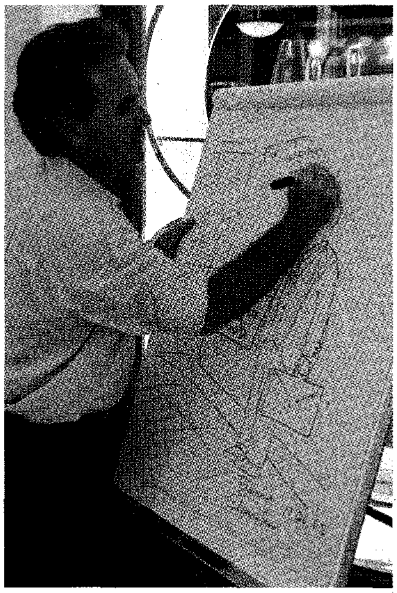

To celebrate Movado's diamond jewelry collections, the *New Yorker* Promotion Department held a special "Cartoon and Cocktails" reception at the Movado Boutique at The Shops at Riverside, in Hackensack, New Jersey.

The event took place on October 20th, and featured the *New Yorker* cartoonist Danny Shanahan, who created custom cartoons and autographed complimentary *New Yorker* cartoon books. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were served while guests shopped and admired Movado's distinctive watches and elegant, modern jewelry designs.

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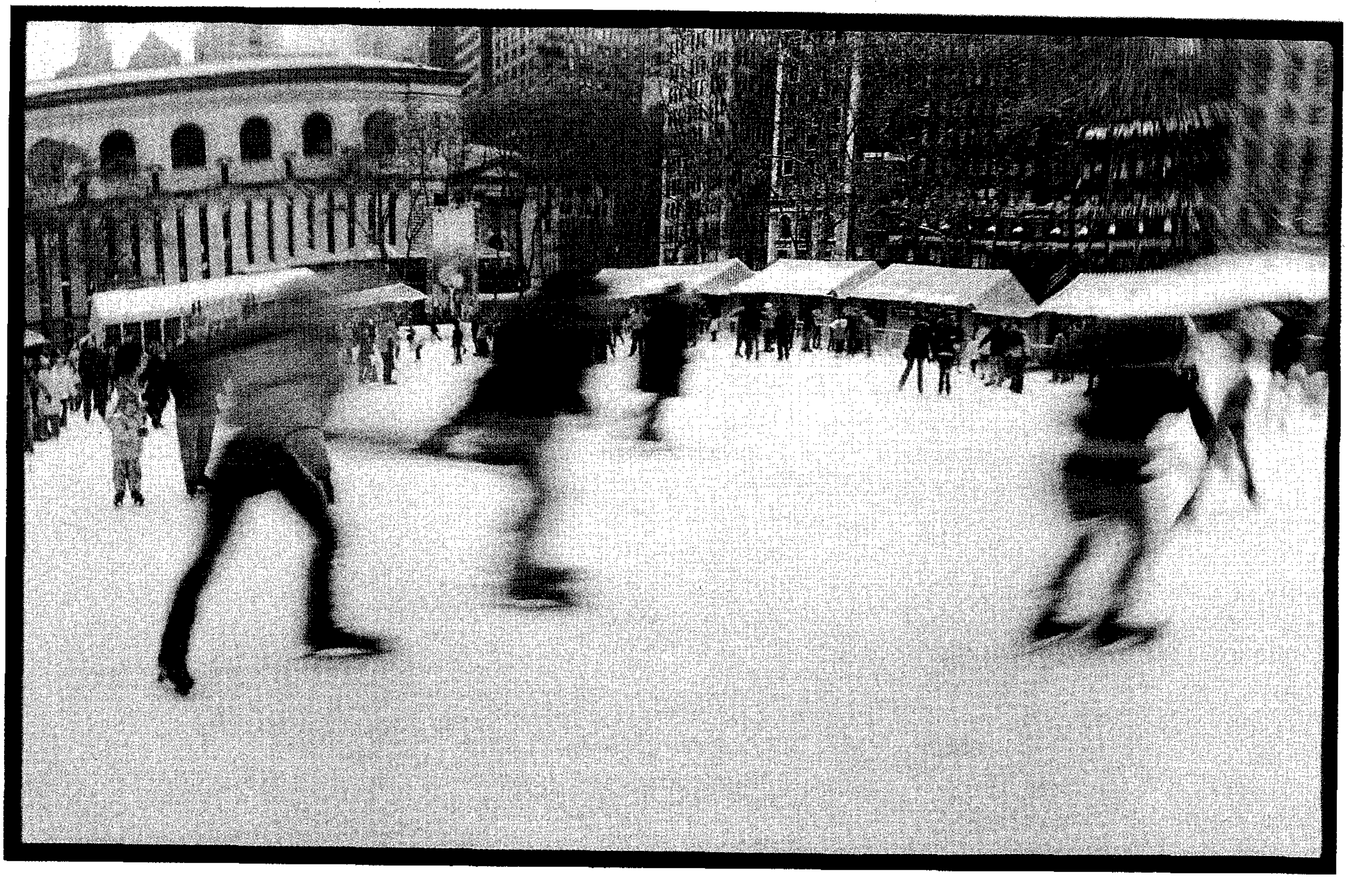

The Bryant Park ice rink, in midtown Manhattan. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
CUBA ONSTAGE

The Cuban-American playwright Nilo Cruz won fame and a Pulitzer Prize for his 2003 play, "Anna in the Tropics," about Cuban-exile cigar-makers in Tampa. His new play, "Beauty of the Father," opens at the Manhattan Theatre Club. Michael Greif directs. (See page 10.)

NIGHT LIFE
THAT'S ALL, FOLKS

After the craziness of the holiday season, it makes sense to retreat into the craziness of Raymond Scott, the avant-garde American composer whose work—including the immortally frenetic "Powerhouse"—became the soundtrack for Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and other Warner Bros. cartoon characters. The seven-piece Raymond Scott Orchestrette leads the charge at Makor. (See page 14.)

ART
DRAWINGS BY DION

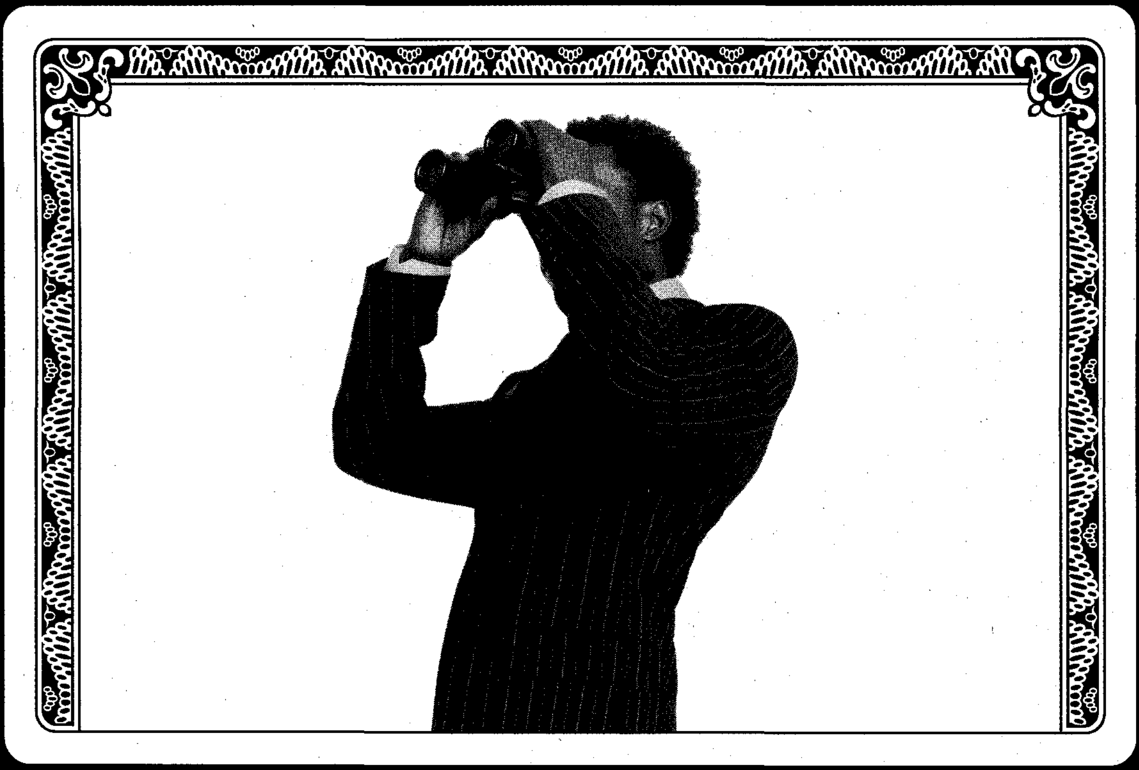
Mark Dion's last major project in New York, "Rescue Archaeology," helped inaugurate the new MOMA by exploring the physical evidence of its site's past. His new installation, at Bonakdar, in Chelsea, through Jan. 14, is a similarly exuberant jumble of elevated ephemera, paired with a series of drawings and prints. (See page 15.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
MERRY JANUARY

The holiday fizz continues for just a little while longer at Amato Opera and the Metropolitan Opera, which offer their final performances of two classic operettas, Lehár's "The Merry Widow" and Strauss's "Die Fledermaus" (with Sondra Radvanovsky and Bo Skovhus), respectively. (See page 17.)

MOVIES
A PLACE FOR HIM

Stephen Sondheim, who made two musicals based on movies, selected a clutch of films for MOMA's "Artist's Choice" series. The composer of "Sweeney Todd" chose Stanley Kubrick's "Barry Lyndon" for its "use of extravagantly beautiful photography to depict bloodlessness and violence" and François Truffaut's "The Story of Adele H" for its kinship with his play "Passion." (See page 21.)



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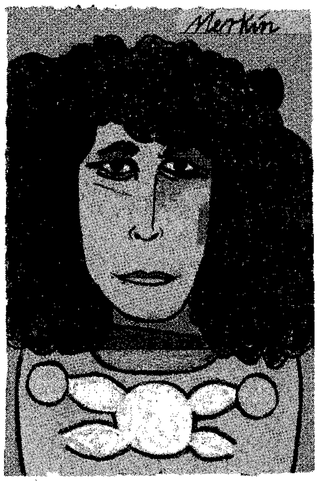
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
THE DIVINE SARAH

"Sarah Bernhardt: The Art of High Drama," now at the Jewish Museum, is a brilliant, multifaceted exhibition that explores not only theatre lore but the real work that goes into becoming a myth. The co-curators, Kenneth E. Silver and Carol Ockman, trace the Parisian-born actress's arduous journey from novice to star. Bernhardt, who was born Jewish but baptized and raised Catholic, confronted the media's anti-Semitic focus on her Jewish heritage as well as her public's concern over her rather exotic life choices (she was rumored to have slept in a coffin); she was determined to be herself on and off the stage. In so doing, Bernhardt became the culture's first theatrical superstar, fantastical and solidly practical all at once. Bernhardt continues to inspire a "Was she magnificent?" wistfulness, which Marilyn Monroe captures in the film clip that opens the show. Monroe's Technicolor, modernist stance shows us just how far Bernhardt's artistic progeny go to be seen and heard.

—*Hilton Als*



THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ALMOST, MAINE
A romantic comedy set in a remote northern town, by John Cariani. Directed by Gabriel Barre. In previews. (Daryl Roth, 101 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

ANTON
Pierre van der Spuy's play explores Anton Chekhov's quest for love and happiness. Previews begin Jan. 10. (Greenwich Street Theatre, 547 Greenwich St. 212-352-3101.)

BEAUTY OF THE FATHER
Manhattan Theatre Club presents the New York première of a play by Nilo Cruz ("Anna in the Tropics"), about a woman who travels to Spain to reconnect with her father. Michael Greif ("Rent") directs. In previews. Opens Jan. 10. (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

CULTUREMART
A festival of new works by resident artists of the HERE Arts Center that include music, dance, visual art, and puppetry. Jan. 5-22. (145 Sixth Ave. 212-868-4444.)

GONER
In a new comedy by Brian Parks, the President gets shot and ends up in the care of three twisted doctors. Previews begin Jan. 5. Opens Jan. 7. (Kraine, 85 E. 4th St. 212-868-4444.)

HECUBA
The Pearl presents Euripides' tragedy from 425 B.C. Previews begin Jan. 5. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED
A new comedy by Douglas Carter Beane, about a closeted gay Hollywood star. In previews. Opens Jan. 10. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
The Vital Theatre Company, in association with HonkBark Productions, mounts a new production of Shakespeare's romantic comedy. Opens Jan. 6. (McGinn/Cazale, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. 212-352-3101.)

NEW YORK GILBERT & SULLIVAN PLAYERS
The troupe's thirty-second season features repertory productions of "H.M.S. Pinafore," in which a sailor falls in love with the daughter of a socially ambitious captain, and "The Mikado," a satire about the downfall of a cruel emperor. Jan. 6-15. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

THE STONES
The Melbourne-based Zeal Theatre presents a two-man drama about the 1994 death of an Australian motorist that was caused by two teen-age boys kicking a stone off a freeway overpass. Opens Jan. 6. (The Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

WHAT THEN
A new play by Rinne Groff, about a family trying to adapt to the deteriorating environment around them. Hal Brooks directs. Previews begin Jan. 7. Opens Jan. 9. (Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 212-868-4444.)

THE YOUNG COMPANY: MOLIÈRE CYCLE
Columbia Stages, in association with Classic Stage Company, presents the Molière comedies "Scapin," "The Misanthrope," and "Tartuffe," performed by a cast of Columbia M.F.A.-student actors. Opens Jan. 3. (136 E. 13th St. 212-279-4200.)

NOW PLAYING

ABIGAIL'S PARTY
In the New Group's New York première of Mike Leigh's 1977 comedy, Jennifer Jason Leigh turns in a fiendishly good performance as Beverly, the self-appointed It Girl of the London suburbs and, as her unfortunate party guests discover, an excruciating shrew whose beguilements are the frilly instruments of doom. In fact, everyone who enters Beverly's presence—including her beleaguered husband (the excellent Max Baker) and an assortment of unwitting neighbors—appears to be the worse for it. As the group loses its collective good sense to gin, Beverly's soirée goes thoroughly south and the comedy grows blacker. By then, the play is nearly drunk on its own caustic abandon; in the able hands of the director, Scott Elliott ("Hurlyburly"), though, it offers an uneasy portrait of middle-class implosion. (Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

APPARITION
This production arrives too late for Halloween, which at least would have offered it a raison d'être. As it is, the disjointed script, by Anne Washburn, offers little inducement to stay tuned, though the director, Les Waters, tries every atmospheric trick to keep it rolling. The short monologues and scenes never develop a sustaining focus, though the nimble young cast—including the ever-resourceful T. Ryder Smith, with his glittering eyes and dry deadpan—does whatever possible to bring out the mordancy in this purple pastiche of ghoulish Victoriana and tongue-in-cheek goth. (Connelly, 220 E. 4th St. 212-352-3101. Through Jan. 7.)

CANDIDA
The Jean Cocteau Repertory's season of "five classic women" continues with George Bernard Shaw's 1904 sendup of the institution of marriage. (Bouwerie Lane, 330 Bowery. 212-279-4200.)

CELEBRATION / THE ROOM
A fascinating Harold Pinter double bill (well directed by Neil Pepe, at the Atlantic Theatre Company) brings together his first play, "The Room" (1957), and "Celebration" (1999). In "The Room," a jejune and portentous one-act, Pinter stumbled on a psychological truth that he continued to explore brilliantly for half a century: mankind's passion for ignorance. In "Celebration," which takes place at two adjacent banquettes of an elegant restaurant, language is the main character. With mockery, weasel words, tall tales, the syncopation of repetition, and, of course, a carapace of pauses, the characters perform a sensational exercise in denial. The silence—the force that compels all of Pinter's manic motormouths—is huge, terrifying, and, in Pinter's masterly hands, visionary. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/19/05.) (336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

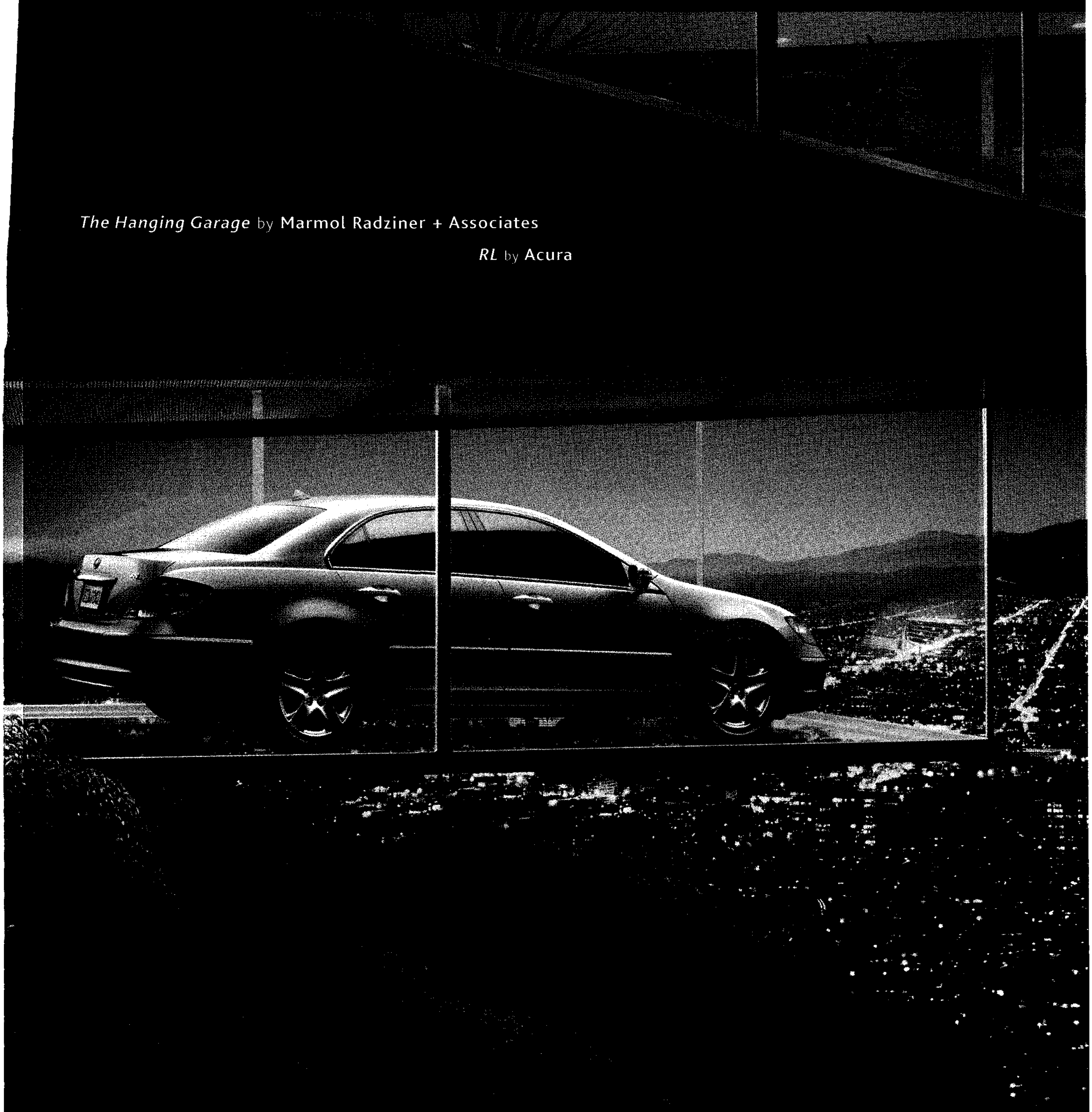
CHITA RIVERA: THE DANCER'S LIFE
Rivera, supported by a cast of ten, stars in a musical about her life and career, touching on shows by Jerome Robbins, Leonard Bernstein, and Bob Fosse. With a book by Terrence McNally. Directed and choreographed by Graciela Daniele. (Schoenfeld, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

DOG SEES GOD: CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE BLOCKHEAD
In an acid little comedy by Bert V. Royal, the "Peanuts" gang has evolved into a group of depraved, damaged high schoolers—Linus is now a stoner who has toked the remains of his blanket, Sally has gone goth, and Charlie Brown (Eddie Kaye Thomas, of the "American Pie" movies) is, as ever, in the awkward throes of his own befuddled existence. (Best not to ask about Snoopy.) Sly in-jokes and the thrill of sacrilege provide the fuel for this Fringe Festival transfer, but when the play takes a darker turn toward suicide and homophobic hate crime, even the most irreverent Charles Schulz fans may shudder. Directed by Trip Cullman. (Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

IN THE CONTINUUM
The fiery young performers Danai Gurira and Nikkole Salter have moved to the Perry Street Theatre with their intelligent (and often comedic) play about the economic dependency, social stigma, and family pressure faced by black women with H.I.V. (31 Perry St. 212-868-4444.)

MR. MARMALADE
In Noah Haidle's exhilarating new play (well directed by Michael Greif), which is reminiscent of a 2002 article by Adam Gopnik for this magazine entitled "Bumping Into Mr. Ravioli," the title character is the imaginary friend of a lively but neglected four-year-old called Lucy (Mamie Gummer, making her impressive Off Broadway début). Mr. Marmalade (Michael C. Hall) is a buttoned-down, briefcase-toting simulacrum, one suspects,

RICHARD MERKIN



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of Lucy's absent father. Although grownups occasionally intrude on Lucy's busy world—she's the only child of a divorced mother in suburban New Jersey—the events of the play mainly concern the games with which she peoples her solitude, and Lucy's pretensions to adulthood are alternately hilarious and heartbreaking. (12/5/05) (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION
George Bernard Shaw's satirical play about the clash of mores between a mother who profits unapologetically from the world's oldest profession and her Cambridge-educated daughter, whose passion is for the placid life of an actuary, receives a tepid revival at the Irish Repertory. The director, Charlotte Moore, has an undeniable asset in Dana Ivey's flinty vitality as Mrs. Warren, but Laura Odeh's kittenish Vivie never seems adequate to the task of bettering her formidable mother. A secondary conflict between Vivie's suitor (Kevin Collins) and his foolish clerical father (Kenneth Garner) offers a more energized comic spectacle. The result is a curiously irresolute production, which gambols along without making much of an impression. (132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737.)

THE OTHER SIDE
In Manhattan Theatre Club's production of a new play by Ariel Dorfman ("Death and the Maiden"), John Cullum and Rosemary Harris play an elderly husband and wife waiting anxiously for the end of a decades-long war and for the return of their runaway son. Dorfman's work often deals with the ambiguous emotional fallout of political strife—but when his open-ended dramas are matched with unspecific acting, as they are here, the dialogue loses its potency for subtext. In fact, Beowulf Boritt's evocative set, which contrasts warm hues of red and turquoise with the bleak grayness of the surrounding world, has more texture and surprise than Blanka Zizka's direction. (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

SWEENEY TODD
Under the bold direction and design of John Doyle, this imported British revival at the Eugene O'Neill, which shrinks the cast of thirty to ten, with actors doubling as musicians, is almost unbearably exciting. Michael Cerveris is a terrifying Sweeney, a model of sulfurous restraint, and Patti LuPone, as his pragmatic and pathological helpmate, Mrs. Lovett, is a gargoyle of toughness. (11/14/05) (230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

A TOUCH OF THE POET
In the Roundabout production (under the direction of Doug Hughes) of the 1936 Eugene O'Neill play, set in 1828, the braggadocio of the well-nicknamed Con Melody (the admirable Gabriel Byrne)—an Irishman who clings to his aristocratic posture, even though he is the hapless owner of a dingy tavern outside Boston—nearly destroys his household. The play is overwrought and overwritten: O'Neill can describe Con's self-delusion, but he can't penetrate it. And despite fine support from Dearbhla Molloy, as Con's long-suffering wife, and Byron Jennings, as his boozy sidekick, the play hardly ever comes alive. (12/19/05) (Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL
A beautifully realized presentation of Horton Foote's 1953 play about the longing to reach backward to a time of surety. Lois Smith portrays Carrie Watts with a luminous purity and slight befuddlement, making her quest to return, before her death, to the tiny Texas farm town of her birth an almost heroic one. Obstacles abound: Mrs. Watts has a heart condition and, even worse, a shrewish daughter-in-law (Hallie Foote) who keeps her shut up in blindingly close quarters. When the old lady runs away via Greyhound bus, you want to applaud her courage and faith in the kindness of strangers. In this sterling production by the director Harris Yulin, such faith is not only possible, but necessary. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

Also Playing

ALTAR BOYZ: Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **THE COLOR PURPLE:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200. **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **DOUBT:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **FIDDLER ON THE ROOF:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100. Through Jan. 8. **FOOLS IN LOVE:** Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200. **HAIRSPRAY:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100. **JERSEY BOYS:** August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200. **THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4747. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-239-6200. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **THE ODD COUPLE:** Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100. **RFK:** The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100. **SEASCAPE:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. Through Jan. 8. **SOUVENIR:** Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. Through Jan. 8. **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE:** Circle in the Square, 50th St. between Broadway and Eighth Ave. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100. **THE WOMAN IN WHITE:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Jan. 5: The former New Kid on the Block **Jordan Knight** and the erstwhile 98° member **Jeff Timmons** join forces to see if there's life after teen pop. Jan. 6-7: The Springsteen cronies **Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes** throw a party. Jan. 8: **Sodom** and **Finntroll,** two bands that Vikings would have enjoyed listening to while pillaging, sail into town. Sodom is a long-running thrash-metal ensemble from Germany. Helsinki's Finntroll gamely spices its death metal with traditional Finnish folk elements and—wait for it—bits of polka.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Jan. 6: The sophisticated local concern **Ivy.** The trio—the French singer Dominique Durand, Adam Schlesinger (of Fountains of Wayne), and the multi-instrumentalist Andy Chase (who happens to be Durand's husband)—traffics in indie pop that has a graceful electronic edge.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—Jan. 6: The Mississippi born d.j. **Diplo** works his turntables at one of the city's art Meccas, proving that in the past few years he's moved beyond the electronica underground. Last year, Wesley Pentz, as he is also known, leaked a few bumping remixes of songs off the British singer M.I.A.'s début album. For rap fans, he produced a track, "Reload It," for the U.K. grime artist Kano's first album, "Home Sweet Home," that became a hit. Diplo also delved into the Brazilian beats known as "baile funk," recording two albums, one in 2004 and one in 2005.

HAPPY VALLEY
14 E. 27th St. (212-481-2628)—In central Pennsylvania, there's a portion of the state known as the Happy Valley, but that's not what inspired this club. More likely it was Courbet's painting "L'Origine du Monde," or at least the fertile region it depicts: over the club's main bar a long motorized sculpture of two female legs in fishnet stockings opens and closes above patrons' heads. The work is strictly PG-13 (there's underwear on it), as are the leopard-print banquettes, the d.j. booth shaped like a disco ball, the mirror-covered toilets, and the rest of the Jeremy Scott-designed club. The free hourly shots, however, and the music (by the likes of the Ark, Tommie Sunshine, and Felix da Housecat) hold the potential to inject a little more adult fun.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Jan. 8: In the mid-sixties, before the bassist Chris Squire and the guitarist Peter Banks formed the über-successful band Yes, they were in the **Syn,** with the vocalist Steve Nardelli. Recently two of the three members, Squire and Nardelli, brought the band out of mothballs for a record of unreconstructed prog rock, "Syndestructible." Jan. 9: The Broadway vet **Daphne Rubin-Vega** (she was Mimi in the original cast of "Rent").

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Jan. 10: **Cordero,** a bilingual outfit with an adventurous sensibility and Latin roots led by the vocalist Ani Cordero and her husband, Chris Verene, offers songs from its forthcoming album, "En Este Momento."

NOKIA THEATRE TIMES SQUARE
Broadway at 44th St. (212-307-7171)—Jan. 7: The groundbreaking speed-metal act **Anthrax** is back with the lineup from its most successful late-eighties incarnation, featuring the vocalist Joey Belladonna, the bassist Frank Bello, and the guitarist Dan Spitz.

NORTHSIX
66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—Jan. 7: **Method of Defiance,** the latest project of the maverick underground producer and bassist Bill Laswell, combines the bizarre guitar antics of Buckethead, the drumming of Guy Licata, and additional sound manipulation by DJ Submerged and the experimental dub practitioner Dr. Israel. Many things will be honored in their performance, but genre boundaries are not among them. The ensemble's début album, "The Only Way to Go Is Down," is slated for a February release.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

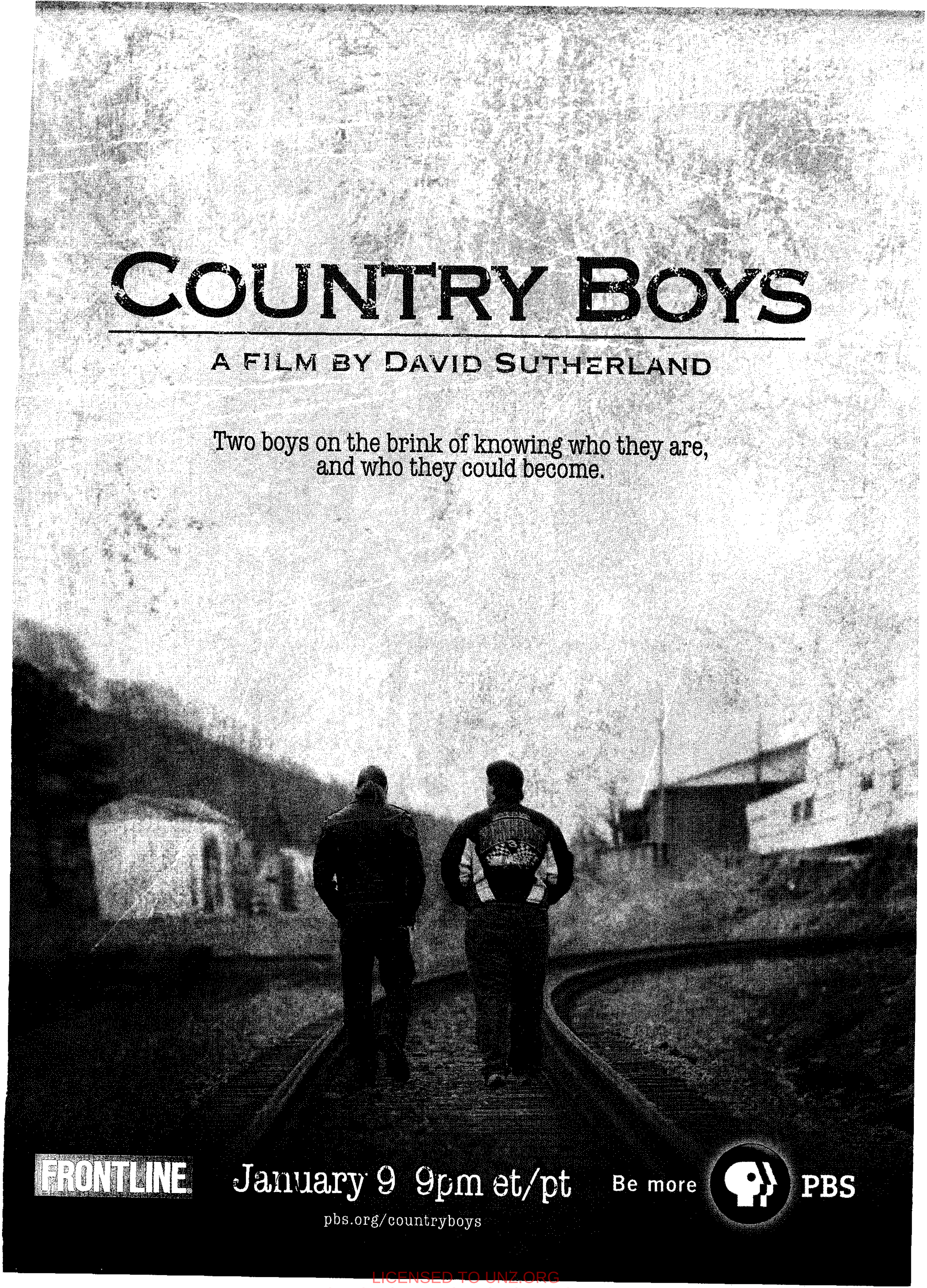
ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—The cabaret mainstay **Andrea Marcovicci** doesn't have the strongest voice in the business, but she consistently delivers witty repartee and engaging historical patter, and her material is always first-rate. She's here with a three-week run devoted to Fred Astaire.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Jan. 3-8: There's nothing demure about **Ann Hampton Callaway's** singing; she's the kind of swinging, stentorian-voiced vocalist who, in another era, would have been fronting a big band. Luckily for her, there still exists the **Diva Jazz Orchestra,** an all-female ensemble that kicks with swing-era force. Callaway—channelling her inner Ella—will be right in her element.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Jan. 3-8: The **Joey DeFrancesco** trio. He hasn't quite learned the virtues of less-is-more, but the exciting if musically verbose DeFrancesco is determined to keep the Hammond-organ aesthetic alive and thriving in the twenty-first century.

"HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ"
Jan. 5: A night of mainstream-guitar nirvana. **Bucky Pizzarelli, Russell Malone, Howard Alden, Gene Bertoncini,** and **Frank Vignola** are each brilliant stylists with timeless swing-to-bop proclivities. Flashy picking will not be in short supply, but melody and swing, above all, will rule. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 212-220-1460.)

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Jan. 4-8: **Steve Wilson,** the fluent saxophonist and flutist who first gained recognition a decade ago in Chick Corea's Origin band and has been steadily evolving ever since, is joined by the trumpeter **Nicholas Payton,** another aging young lion whose playing retains the aggressive poise of his youth. Jan. 9:



COUNTRY BOYS

A FILM BY DAVID SUTHERLAND

Two boys on the brink of knowing who they are,
and who they could become.

FRONTLINE

January 9 9pm et/pt

pbs.org/countryboys

Be more PBS

Gretchen Parlato comes armed with a 2004 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition win, as well as the effusive praise of both Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter. Jan. 10: The **Ben Monder** trio. Finding something to say that Metheny, Scofield, and Frisell haven't already expressed is the unenviable task faced by post-boomer jazz guitarists. Monder, a noted new-jazz player since the eighties, faces the challenge head on.

MAKOR

35 W. 67th St. (212-601-1000)—Jan. 5: Raymond Scott, the unclassifiable composer and bandleader, was one of those left-of-center eccentrics who lit up the American musical scene. His anarchically minded yet strictly structured works live on through the **Raymond Scott Orchestrette,** a lively septet that honors the spirit but isn't bound to the letter of Scott's irrepressible vision.

THE STONE

Avenue C at 2nd St. (No phone)—Jan. 5: The guitarist **Marc Ribot** stops by with his **Spiritual Unity** ensemble. Only Ribot, a professional iconoclast if there ever was one, would create a band devoted to the legendary saxophonist Albert Ayler *without* a saxophonist. The trumpeter **Roy Campbell, Jr.,** the drummer **Chad Taylor,** and the bassist **Henry Grimes,** a key Ayler collaborator from the sixties, round out the group.

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Jan. 3-8: **Jimmy Greene,** a no-nonsense neo-bop tenor saxophonist whose conviction helps him stand out in the crowd, has enjoyed the benefit of playing with two fine role models—the hard-bop architect Horace Silver and the valiant trumpeter Tom Harrell. **The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

TABLES FOR TWO
D'OR AHN

207 Tenth Ave., at 22nd St. (212-627-7777)—As a girl in Seoul, Lannie Ahn would ride a bus into the countryside to taste *sulungtang*, a traditional soup made with the internal organs of a cow that was said to bring luck to farmers. Two decades later, she found herself in New York, working in marketing. Before long, she quit her job to open D'or Ahn, a chic spot in west Chelsea that makes French work—soufflé, mousse, vinaigrette—of such Korean materials as pickled pear, sesame leaf, and mung bean. (The chef Rachel Yang, an alumna of Ducasse and Per Se, put together the menu with the help of Ahn's mother.)

Like its proprietor, D'or Ahn has a rigorous approach that doesn't stand in the way of some excellent impulses. Each dish has a declarative title. "Oyster," for example, consists of mollusks on ice, daubed with *uni*, cucumber purée, and blazing-red kimchi. Served on a kidney-shaped plate, it resembles a painter's palette. "Pork," it turns out, is a composition in liquid: bits of quail egg and pig-cheek ravioli bobbing in a milky onion broth.

The masterpiece of the menu is "Pork Belly," a lardy glory. Braised with bean paste and heaped on top of millet risotto, it was being relished, the other night, by everyone from a man in a black beret to two guys from Holland. Ahn, in a Rochas pouf skirt, walked quickly from one end of the narrow room to the other, taking reservations on a cordless phone and stopping to make conversation. Her poles were a little Zen reflecting pool and a beribboned topiary.

At D'or Ahn, the portions are tasteful, tasty, and tiny. Feeling spry after dinner, you might stay on at the bar, where the bartender pours Korea's national spirit, *soju*, into a small glass that overflows into a surrounding pine moat: a shot in a box. If you do not know that *soju* means "burning liquor," you could wake up feeling charred and wish that Ahn would find a way to Frenchify *hae-jang guk*, a traditional soup made with the internal organs of a cow that is said to cure hangovers. (Open daily for dinner. Entrées $20-$26.)

—*Lauren Collins*

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"Robert Rauschenberg: Combines."** A thoroughgoing examination of Rauschenberg's poetic constructions, from the untitled 1954 combine that is believed to be his first to the series's 1964 finale, "Gold Standard." Through April 2. ♦ The small but notable exhibition **"Antonello da Messina: Sicily's Renaissance Master"** includes the masterly, enigmatic "Virgin Annunciate." Through March 5. ♦ The devotional paintings in **"Fra Angelico"** are lit up with heavenly blues, blood reds, and pure golds. Rewarding long contemplation, they can feel like love letters, passed down through the centuries from the fifteenth-century Tuscan artist. Through Jan. 29. ♦ **"Santiago Calatrava: Sculpture Into Architecture."** Through March 5. ♦ **"Clouet to Seurat: French Drawings from the British Museum."** Through Jan. 29. ♦ **"David Milne Watercolors: 'Painting Toward the Light.'"** A subset of a larger show organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario, these forty-five watercolors provide a rare chance to see the work of the Canadian artist (1882-1953) outside his home country. Through Jan. 29. ♦ The centerpiece of **"The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt"** is a fifteen-foot papyrus (ca. 1650-1550 B.C.), on loan from the New York Academy of Medicine, explaining the diagnosis and treatment of wounds to the head, neck, and shoulders by means both scientific and magical. Ointment jars, statues of healing gods, implements, and mummies are also on display. Through Jan. 15. ♦ **"Adorning the World: Art of the Marquesas Islands"** is a small show of objects, dating from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century, from the Polynesian island group that was Paul Gauguin's last home. The Marquesans embellished everything—their bodies with tattoos, pipes and musical instruments with carving, headdresses with feathers—and let little go to waste. One vitrine is filled with ornaments sculpted from the bones of enemies killed in battle. Through Jan. 15. ♦ The Costume Institute presents **"Rara Avis: Selections from the Iris Barrel Apfel Collection."** Through Jan. 22. ♦ **"The Armored Horse in Europe, 1480-1620."** Through Jan. 14, 2007. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—A sickly, lonely boy who grew up roaming his parents' country estate, Odilon Redon (1840-1916) later found his métier in symbolist and decadent dream life. **"Beyond the Visible: The Art of Odilon Redon"** emphasizes the artist's debts to other blackhearted fantasists like Poe and Baudelaire, Flaubert and Goya, in charcoal drawings and lithographs tending toward the nightmarish—spiders have grinning monkey faces, eyeballs sail disembodied through dark skies, and mutant innocents are beset by monstrous shapes. Then, at the turn of the century, Redon explodes into jewel-toned oils and pastels, and the floating creatures turn aquatic, oral, angelic. Through Jan. 23. ♦ Elizabeth Murray's canvases occupy an idiosyncratic zone somewhere between Cubism, Surrealism, and Looney Toons. This career retrospective tracks the painter's progress as she tried to reconcile with minimalism in the late sixties and early seventies, then ultimately rebelled against it. The titles to her relief paintings are like responses to some tortured inner dialogue: "More Than You Know," "Do the Dance," "Don't Be Cruel." By the early eighties, her works were composed of multiple canvases that drifted apart like tectonic plates or unruly puzzle pieces. In recent paintings, she favors bright, child-friendly primary and secondary hues. Murray's slapstick aesthetic is an acquired taste but, like that of Carroll Dunham or Philip Guston, an essentially American and dissenting one. Through Jan. 9. ♦ **"Pixar."** The company that brought us "Toy Story" and "The Incredibles" is honored with an exhibition of paintings, sketches, sculptures, models, and digital installations, as well as a program of animated films. Through Feb. 6. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—The sprawling exhibition **"Russia!"** includes most everything you might think could fit under that rubric: gilt religious icons dating from the Middle Ages, Renaissance-era Western European paintings from imperial collections, romanticized portraits of peasant life, socialist-realist propaganda, early modernist masterworks from the collections of industrialists, videos made just this year. Through Jan. 11. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—**"The Art of Richard Tuttle."** The post-minimalist artist whose work helped blur the lines separating painting from sculpture from drawing, Tuttle is edging toward grand-old-man status, with a retrospective spanning from the sixties to the present. He is, of course, an odd candidate for grandeur of any kind. His wonky constructions of poor materials—cardboard, plywood, rope, the occasional twig or soda can—strenuously resist beauty, opting instead for a fey fragility that, when it works, embodies serendipity with assemblages that pit flatness against relief, poise against entropy, bright, flat color against dull or scuffed texture. When it doesn't work, the willful innocence tempts a response of the "My kid could do that" variety. Through Feb. 5. ♦ **"Follow Through,"** a "mobile audio-visual project" (not a tour!) created by the artists Jennifer Crowe and Scott Paterson that tracks the Director's Tour of the fifth-floor permanent collection. Through Jan. 29. ♦ Ed Ruscha's **"Course of Empire"**—which shares a name and theme with Thomas Cole's 1833-36 cycle of paintings, in the New-York Historical Society's permanent collection—was a hit at the Venice Biennale and is on view at the Whitney through Jan. 29. ♦ **"Raymond Pettibon."** Thirty-seven drawings and an animated film. Through Feb. 19. ♦ The retrospective **"Oscar Bluemner: A Passion for Color"** reveals a painter (1867-1938) who melded Old World influences with an architect's training and eye—updated later by the lessons of the Fauves, Die Brücke, and artists like Franz Marc—to produce images of buildings and landscapes broken into bright structural shards, like segments of stained glass. Through Feb. 12. ♦ **"Still Life: A Vital Theme."** Through Jan. 15. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Darwin"** traces the discoveries and influence of the great naturalist (1809-82) with, among other things, a re-creation of his study, samples of fossils he collected, and live specimens of the types of tortoises, frogs, and iguanas that he encountered in his travels to the Galápagos Islands. Through May 29. ♦ **"Dinosaurs: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries,"** a review of recent developments in the study of dinosaurs, provides insight into how the animals moved through their world. Through Jan. 8. ♦ **"The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter"** is back for an eighth year. Through May 29. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

CHELSEA ART MUSEUM
556 W. 22nd St. (212-255-0719)—The Spanish sculptor and painter Cristóbal Gabarrón enjoys his first American retrospective with this showing of paintings, works on paper, and objects. Faintly Kandinsky- and Klee-inflected abstractions give way to raunchy but lyrical erotic drawings and mannerist Pop constructions in welded, polychromed steel and painted clay. The show is called **"The Body Image in Cristóbal Gabarrón's Art, 1963-2005,"** and after the great muse of sex his inspiration seems to have been the pulse of the city as a container for human energies. But there are also a few wistful, evocative landscapes circa 1970, set in Vietnam. Through Jan. 14. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

JAPAN SOCIETY
333 E. 47th St. (212-752-3015)—**"Hiroshi Sugimoto: History of History."** Through Feb. 19. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 11 to 6, Fridays, 11 to 9, and weekends, 11 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Sarah Bernhardt: The Art of High Drama."** Through April 2. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, Thursdays, 11 to 8, and Fridays, 11 to 3.)

MUSEO DEL BARRIO
Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (212-831-7272)—**"The (S) Files/The Selected Files,"** a showcase for emerging artists featuring forty Latinos and Latin-Americans. Through Jan. 29. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"Egon Schiele,"** an exhibition of more than a hundred and fifty paintings and drawings by the Austrian artist, who died in 1918, at the age of twenty-eight. Through Feb. 20. (Open Saturdays through Mondays, and Thursdays, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 11 to 9.)

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (212-869-8089)—**"The Splendor of the Word: Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts."** Through Feb. 12. ♦ In honor of the renovation of the library's Map Division, some wonders from the archives are unfolded in **"Treasured Maps."** Through April 9. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 7:30, Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 1 to 5.)

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St., at Seventh Ave. (212-620-5000)—Serene sage, all-giving mother, or lion-headed protectress, the female Buddha takes many forms. **"Female Buddhas: Women of Enlightenment in Himalayan Art"** also includes depictions of Hindu deities, among the approximately fifty paintings, sculptures, and textiles dating from the thirteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Through Jan. 15. ♦ **"The Demonic Divine in Himalayan Art"** revels in the horrific, with scenes of bodies flayed, writhing, and dismembered. The bloodcurdling images are meant to assure viewers of the fierceness of protective deities. For an antidote, descend the staircase to **"Perfected Beings, Pure Realms,"** where the motifs tend toward flowers, birds, and fruit. Through April 9 and Feb. 10, respectively. (Open Tuesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 7, Wednesdays, 11 to 5, Thursdays and Fridays, 11 to 9, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"Frequency,"** a selection of work by black emerging artists active in the U.S. Through March 12. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

MAXIMILIAN BODE

GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.

DUANE MICHALS
With two new series combining photos and handwritten text, Michals continues to test our tolerance for whimsy, sentimentality, and sincerity. Although the individual tableaux and still-lifes in "Ukiyo-E: Pictures from the Floating World" include some of his most vivacious color images (and the first he's shown in a gallery), they seem slight next to the black-and-white narrative sequences that make up "The Adventures of Constantine Cavafy." For this series, the actor Joel Grey stands in for the Greek poet and acts out scenes including a tryst with a hustler, a game of strip poker, and an encounter on the street. Even if the objects of desire look like Abercrombie & Fitch models, Michals explores desire with his usual wit but with a more profound sense of poignance than usual. Through Jan. 7. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 212-979-7999.)

Short List

YVES KLEIN: Michael Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 212-988-1623. Through Jan. 14. **SAUL LEITER:** Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010. Through Jan. 21. **RICHARD POUSETTE-DART:** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 212-794-0550. Through Jan. 7. **GERHARD RICHTER:** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 212-977-7160. Through Jan. 14. **MASSIMO VITALI:** Benrubi, 41 E. 57th St. 212-888-6007. Through Jan. 28.

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

MARK DION
Hunkered down at the three-way crossroads where elegy meets buffoonery meets ire, Dion's installations interrogate the discursive categories of natural science, specimen collection, and the dream, or nightmare, of encyclopedic knowledge. "The Curiosity Shop" is the latest iteration of his perennial idea, and, while it excavates familiar territory, it's still a pleasure to explore. The centerpiece is a full-sized cottage, a crackpot's studio jammed with junk, including taxidermied mammals, plastic toys, and cans of house paint. One must peep through the windows at this suggestive jumble, but a group of drawings and prints can be enjoyed up close. Dion employs a clean, humorous illustrator's line, and his works on paper dissect the realms of "naturalia" and "artificialia" but also blithely splice them. Through Jan. 14. (Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 212-414-4144.)

Patrons take in the sights at Happy Valley, a club on the edge of the garment district.

GARY SCHNEIDER
Schneider's life-size portraits—each a full-length nude seemingly buoyed up and floating on a pitch-black void—loom from the walls like earthy gods and goddesses. Photographed lying down in the dark over a period of half an hour or more, the figures are only partially illuminated and look as if they were dusted with soot. They might be ready for interment, but they're also vividly alive and present, and they confront the viewer eye to eye like long-lost brothers and sisters. The effect is at once unsettling and exciting, all the more so when you're confronted with a subject's frankly erotic response to the photographic experience. Through Jan. 7. (Aperture, 547 W. 27th St. 212-505-5555.)

FELIX SCHRAMM
A current trend among younger artists is an embrace of trompe-l'œil exactitude, sprawled out in three dimensions. Schramm's contribution to the genre is a floor-to-ceiling Expressionist explosion of drywall,

CHEZ CROUX
BAR
SNACKS
PANINI

Massimo Vitali's "Mont Blanc, 2004," in a show of his new work at the Bonni Benrubi gallery, through Jan. 28.

wood, and paint that looks as if a gallery wall had collapsed. The installation, which takes up most of the modest space, is titled "Comber," and it cites an 1840 sailing narrative as the first instance in which the word was used, to describe waves breaking off a beach in California. The nod to etymology is nice but not really carried through in the work, which serves, like much work in the trompe-l'œil Zeitgeist, more as a virtuoso special effect than a layered, meaningful gesture. Through Jan. 28. (Grimm/Rosenfeld, 530 W. 25th St. 212-352-2388.)

"THE MAGNUM ARCHIVE"
This sprawling, eccentrically organized exhibition of more than a hundred vintage photographs from the Magnum agency's vast archive provides a quick immersion in pop history, from the front page to the gossip column. Photographers like Henri Cartier-Bresson, Susan Meiselas, Gilles Peress, Robert Capa, Eve Arnold, and Philip Jones Griffiths sent back photos that captured the heat of the moment with a reporter's clarity and an artist's verve. In an installation that juxtaposes images of Martin Luther King, Marilyn Monroe, Yasir Arafat, and Pablo Picasso, it's difficult to focus on one topic, but look for Bruno Barbey's kinetic shots of the Paris street protests in 1968, made all the more immediate by recent events. Through Jan. 7. (Kasher, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978.)

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

NATE LOWMAN
Richard Prince's junk-culture appropriations and clichéd joke paintings are recycled in Lowman's canvases plastered with bumper stickers. A poster for an unknown kitsch gallery featuring a cowboy on horseback boldly evokes Prince's famed series of rephotographed Marlboro ads. Warhol is echoed in silk-screened paintings of bullet holes. Even with retreads as blatant as these, Lowman's presentation doesn't feel stale. Perhaps it's the frank acknowledgment offered in a scrolling L.E.D. panel turned on its side, which reads "Imitation is the highest form of flattery." Or maybe it's his perspicacity in choosing bumper stickers printed with juicy, archetypal American aphorisms like "A leading cause of stress is reality," "E.S.P. Extra Sexual Person," or "I bet Jesus would have used His turn signals." Through Jan. 8. (Maccarone, 45 Canal St. 212-431-4977.)

PETER PLAGENS
As one of the country's leading art critics, Plagens is well equipped to offer a breakdown of his kinship with other painters: to the primordial scratchings of Cy Twombly, the graffiti scrawls of Basquiat, or the slapstick goofy biomorphism of Carroll Dunham. His muted abstractions are wholly satisfying, however, independent of these comparisons. Hulking forms lurk like ghosts or phantoms in gray and brown and white fields, broken only by prisms of bright color, sometimes shaped like comic-book talk bubbles. The titles don't give much away, although they add some literary zing. One canvas is titled "The Painter Who Knew Better," which raises the question, Better than the critic? Through Jan. 3. (Nancy Hoffman, 429 West Broadway. 212-966-6676.)

"THE LAST GENERATION"
Google "The Last Generation," we are told, and you will find references to everything from obsolete software to A-bomb survivors and the Rapture. The guest curator Max Henry has taken the catchall phrase for the title of his show, in which lowly analog mechanisms stand in for all-too-human feelings of dolefulness and boredom. Notable are Kota Ezawa's ashen animation of Taylor and Burton in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"—sort of like "The Family Guy" for vicious alcoholics—and a weird diptych by Laurent Montaron called "Somniloquie." A large C-print shows a woman asleep, with a microphone pointed at her head and a shirtless man lounging beside her; nearby, a staticky home-pressed record on a cheap phonograph purports to play back her dreams. Through Jan. 7. (Apex Art, 291 Church St. 212-431-5270.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
The company's performances this week are a study in contrasts, with works by Balanchine, the company director Peter Martins, and the resident choreographer, Christopher Wheeldon. Three programs (Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday night) combine Wheeldon's "Liturgy"—a dark pas de deux, with Arvo Pärt's "Fratres," which includes a series of complicated lifts—with a pair of Stravinsky ballets by Balanchine from the early sixties, "Monumentum pro Gesualdo" and "Movements for Piano and Orchestra." The contrast between Wheeldon's tightly wound piece and the two Balanchine ballets, in which small, simple steps and pauses are punctuated by lyrical gestures, should be striking. Balanchine's "Allegro Brillante" (1956), a fast-paced, romantic work with music by Tchaikovsky, will also

be performed, as well as Martins's evening-length "Swan Lake," a less than romantic version of the Tchaikovsky classic. Casts are announced on the Web site a week in advance. ♦ Jan. 4 at 7:30: Balanchine's masterpiece "Concerto Barocco," set to Bach's Double Violin Concerto, "Liturgy," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo," "Movements for Piano and Orchestra," and "Fearful Symmetries." ♦ Jan. 5 at 8: "Allegro Brillante," "Liturgy," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo," "Movements for Piano and Orchestra," and Balanchine's expansive "Symphony in C." ♦ Jan. 6 at 8: "Swan Lake." ♦ Jan. 7 at 2: "Swan Lake." ♦ Jan. 7 at 8: "Allegro Brillante," "Liturgy," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo," "Movements for Piano and Orchestra," and "Fearful Symmetries." ♦ Jan. 8 at 3: "Swan Lake." ♦ Jan. 10 at 7:30: "Swan Lake." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570. Through Feb. 26.)

SAVION GLOVER
The tap-dance virtuoso continues his run at the Joyce. "Visions of a Bible" pairs him with the soulful singer Laurie Ann Hunter, and Glover's band, the Otherz, comes on only for the last song. (175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. Jan. 3-6 at 8, Jan. 7 at 2 and 8, Jan. 8 at 2 and 7:30, and Jan. 10 at 8. Through Jan. 15.)

LAVA
In "(W)hole," which stands for the "(Whole) History of Life on Earth," Sarah East Johnson's troupe of female acrobats go through all kinds of hoops to present their signature balances, handsprings, and trapeze work as illustrations of geological phenomena such as magnetic polarity reversal. But even when the analogies seem forced, the strength and daring amaze and the group dynamic amuses: before and after each maneuver, the performers kiss, or hug, or wrestle, or flip each other off. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101. Jan. 5-7 at 7 and Jan. 8 at 5. Through Feb. 19.)

"DANCE ON CAMERA"
This year's festival opens with "Been Rich All My Life," a documentary tracking the comeback of swing-era chorus girls, and "Sringaram," a fictional account of an Indian temple dancer in the nineteen-twenties. Other programs focus on the choreographers Pina Bausch, Jean-Pierre Perreault, and Frederick Ashton; the filmmaker Charles Atlas premières a reworking of his Merce Cunningham collaboration, "Views on Camera"; and Rachel Shteir, the author of "Striptease," moderates a showing of tantalizing footage. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-875-5600. Jan. 4-7 and Jan. 10. Through Jan. 14. For a complete schedule, visit www.dancefilmsassn.org.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Jan. 4 at 7:30: This year's holiday show is **"Die Fledermaus,"** that delectable dollop of Viennese schlag, offered in Otto Schenk's period-piece production. The cast features Cynthia Lawrence, Harolyn Blackwell, Katharine Goeldner, and Bo Skovhus, with a special appearance by the actor Bill Irwin in the comic speaking role of the jailer Frosch; Jacques Lacombe conducts. ♦ Jan. 7 at 8: The final performance, with Sondra Radvanovsky, Marlis Petersen, and Marina Domashenko joining Skovhus in the leading roles. ♦ Jan. 5 at 8: **"Lucia di Lammermoor,"** with Youngok Shin, Ramón Vargas, Charles Taylor, and Hao Jiang Tian; Edoardo Müller. (This is the final performance.) ♦ Jan. 6 at 8: **"Wozzeck,"** Alban Berg's compact and unforgettable portrait of an ordinary soldier crushed by poverty and madness, returns in the stark Mark Lamos production, with Katarina Dalayman, Clifton Forbis, Graham Clark, Alan Held (in the title role), and Walter Fink; James Levine, an unmatched conductor of Expressionist opera, is in the pit. ♦ Jan. 7 at 1:30: Ramón Vargas steps into the big shoes of Luciano Pavarotti (who used to own the role of Nemorino here) in Donizetti's **"L'Elisir d'Amore,"** a show so blithe and tune-filled that it almost feels like a big American musical. With Ruth Ann Swenson, Peter Coleman-Wright, and Andrew Shore; Maurizio Barbacini. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000. Note: After these performances, the house will be dark until Jan. 20.)

NEW YORK GILBERT & SULLIVAN PLAYERS
Albert Bergeret's group—arguably the best G. & S. troupe in the country—carries the torch for the Savoy Operas; they present two of the greatest, **"H.M.S. Pinafore"** and **"The Mikado,"** in repertory this month. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Jan. 6-15. See Theatre.)

AMATO OPERA
Anthony Amato's company, housed in a tiny old-time theatre on the Lower East Side, closes out the holidays with three final performances of Lehár's **"The Merry Widow"**—sung in English, just as the composer would have wanted. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 212-228-8200. Jan. 6-7 at 7:30 and Jan. 8 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
James Ehnes, a superb young player with an exceptionally clean technique, makes his Philharmonic subscription début (after a successful summertime performance in 2003) with a refreshing alternative to the warhorses, Walton's effervescent Violin Concerto, which was composed for Jascha Heifetz. Lorin Maazel, the conductor, continues his Dvořák bent by leading the Symphony No. 7; the program begins with Wagner's "Flying Dutchman" Overture. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. Jan. 5 and Jan. 10 at 7:30 and Jan. 7 at 8.)

THE MET ORCHESTRA
James Levine, artfully slipping in a bit of modernsim into a refulgently late-Romantic program, has invited Renée Fleming to sing Berg's "Altenberg Lieder"—a vividly colored, aphoristic masterpiece—along with the "Letter Scene" from Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin" and the closing monologue from Strauss's "Capriccio." Tchaikovksy's "Romeo and Juliet" Fantasy-Overture and Wagner's Overture and Bacchanale from "Tannhäuser" are also featured. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Jan. 8 at 3.)

NORTH/SOUTH CONSONANCE
The pianist Max Lifchitz's longtime chamber ensemble concentrates on showcasing composers of both North and South America. He configures his group to string-orchestra size to conduct music by Gerald Elias, Aurelio de la Vega, the Italian composer Ada Gentile ("Adagio per un'Estate," for flute and strings), and himself. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Jan. 8 at 3. No tickets required.)

RECITALS

BARGEMUSIC
Jan. 5-6 at 7:30: Steven Beck, one of the city's most admired and versatile young pianists, teams up with another keyboardist, Michael Mizrahi, for a program of four-hand works by Mozart (the Sonata in F Major, K. 497) and Debussy, along with solo works by Debussy, Bach, and Balakirev (the finger-crunching "Islamey"). ♦ Jan. 7 at 7:30 and Jan. 8 at 4: The elegant and commanding (and chronically underrated) American String Quartet joins with the violinist and violist Jonathan Carney in music by Mozart (the Quartet in D Major, K. 575), Kodály (the lissome Serenade for Two Violins and Viola), and Brahms (the Viola Quintet No. 1 in F Major). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

YING QUARTET
Music by Tod Machover—a composer profoundly engaged in music technology, but a composer first—permeates the adventurous group's latest concert. Electronic interludes by Machover will link a program featuring not only works by Byrd, Bach, Beethoven, Elliott Carter (the two "Fragments"), and the Beatles but also the New York première

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
THREE ON A COUCH

The unearthing of the Sabina Spielrein story, since the relevant papers were discovered in 1977, has become a minor industry. Spielrein came from a Russian Jewish family of respectable means and bad nerves—ideal ground for the new discipline of psychoanalysis. As a teenager, in 1904, she entered a Zurich asylum, in the care of Jung, and fell in love with him. Both parties appealed to Sigmund Freud, no less, for help in the resolution of their plight. Elisabeth Márton, in her unruffled documentary, "My Name Was Sabina Spielrein," uses reconstructions (in mild doses, considering the force of the material), though the still photographs bear more telling witness. Spielrein herself, growing from patient into practitioner, pioneered the psychoanalytic study of children; she married unhappily and later returned to Russia, where she and her daughters were murdered by German troops in 1942. Her life was far from wasted, but the withering of her happiness turns Márton's movie into the saddest of testimonials.

—Anthony Lane

FACETS MULTI-MEDIA

of his work "But Not Simpler," a tribute to both Carter and Einstein. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Jan. 5 at 7:30.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ENSEMBLES
A group of Philharmonic virtuosi—including the violist Cynthia Phelps, the cellist Eric Bartlett, and the clarinettist Stanley Drucker—performs works by Bridge, Prokofiev (the Sonata for Two Violins), Enescu, and the recently deceased American master David Diamond (the Quintet for Clarinet and Strings). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Jan. 8 at 3.)

"COMPOSED UPTOWN"
Manhattan's Washington Heights neighborhood may be growing more fashionable by the month, but it's still a redoubt for a large number of classical musicians. Aaron Jay Kernis, one of the most distinguished of them, will enjoy a concert of his chamber works (including "Trio in Red") performed by members of the Contrasts Quartet, which will also offer Beethoven's "Archduke" Trio. (Our Saviour's Atonement Lutheran Church, Bennett Ave. at 189th St. 212-923-5757. Jan. 8 at 3.)

BACHANALIA
For those fans of the Romanov dynasty who still use the Julian calendar, the violinist Nina Beilina's group will indulge you by offering an imperial Russian New Year's Eve concert a few days later than the date used by the Soviets (and the rest of the world, for that matter). Anton Arensky, whose music has the craftsmanship and sheen of a fine Fabergé egg, dominates the program with his Piano Quintet in D Major; also included are works by Bach and Beethoven (the String Trio in G Major, Op. 9, No. 1). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Jan. 10 at 8.)

MOVIES OPENING

BLOODRAYNE
In this adaptation of an Xbox game, a dhampir (a half-human, half-vampire creature) seeks revenge for the rape of her mother. Directed by Uwe Boll. Opening Jan. 6. (In wide release.)

EL CARRO
Luis Orjuela directed this comedy from Colombia, about a family that acquires its first car. In Spanish. Opening Jan. 5. (Pioneer Theatre.)

FATELESS
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening Jan. 6. (Film Forum.)

GRANDMA'S BOY
A comedy about a thirty-five-year-old man (Allen Covert) who works as a tester of video games and has to move in with his grandmother. Directed by Nicholaus Goossen. Opening Jan. 6. (In wide release.)

HOSTEL
Quentin Tarantino executive-produced this horror film by Eli Roth ("Cabin Fever"), about three young American backpackers in Slovakia who check into the youth hostel from hell. Opening Jan. 6. (In wide release.)

I'M TARANEH, 15
A teen-age girl in Iran marries a boy who impregnates and abandons her. Directed by Rasul Sadrameli. In Farsi. Opening Jan. 6. (Quad Cinema.)

KILL THE POOR
This drama set in 1982, about a young father who moves with his wife and child to an East Village squat, was directed by Alan Taylor. Opening Jan. 6. (IFC Center.)

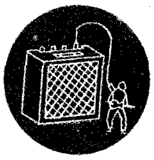
NOW PLAYING

BORN TO KILL
"As you grow older, you'll discover that life is very much like coffee: the aroma is always better than the actuality," says an unscrupulous private eye (Walter Slezak). This psycho-noir from 1947 also has more aroma than body, but at least the aroma is distinctive. Sam Wilde (Lawrence Tierney), who kills anyone he thinks has "monkeyed around" with him, proves irresistible to an upwardly mobile San Francisco divorcée, Helen Brent (Claire Trevor). After he marries Brent's rich foster sister (Audrey Long), a newspaper heiress, this parody of machismo decides that he wants to be editor. The plotting is lacklustre, and most of the dialogue isn't worth saying once, let alone repeating. Luckily, the director, Robert Wise, keeps the focus on whether Wilde, a walking blunt instrument, and Brent, a chin-first gal who survives some horrendous hats, will team up or tear each other to pieces. With Elisha Cook, Jr., as Wilde's ambiguous best friend and roommate, and Esther Howard as a grotesquely bawdy boarding-house landlady.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art, Jan. 7.)

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
In the summer of 1963, Ennis Del Mar (Heath Ledger) and Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal) herd the sheep on Brokeback Mountain, in Wyoming, and fall in love. Ang Lee's movie traces the ups and downs of that love over many years, making it clear that the downs are fated to outnumber the ups. The film has a curious motion to begin with, managing to seem at once hectic and sluggish; once the heroes start to grow up, however, and thus to struggle against their feelings, the story comes painfully alive, and the performances stretch toward the tragic. There is fine support from Anne Hathaway and Michelle Williams as the baffled wives of the two men and from Kate Mara as Ennis's teen-age daughter, but the picture belongs to Ledger, whose downcast gaze and chewed-up words bear almost unbearable testimony to a heart under siege. Any attempt to promote this as an issue movie, gripped by an agenda, feels badly misplaced; the only issue here is the oldest and most sorrowful one of all.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 12/12/05.) (In wide release.)

CACHÉ (HIDDEN)
The latest attempt on the part of the Austrian director Michael Haneke to disturb our peace. As with "Code Unknown," the story takes place in Paris and stars Juliette Binoche, whose blend of suavity and panic seems ideal for Haneke's purposes. This time, she plays Anne, whose husband,

POP NOTES
GOING BACK



Here are some of the year's underappreciated and overlooked pop records:

Art Brut, "Bang Bang Rock & Roll" (Banana/Fierce Panda): In the overpopulated genre of British guitar rock—Franz Ferdinand, Bloc Party, Kaiser Chiefs, and others—the London five-piece Art Brut stands out, not for its energy but for its comedy. "Formed a Band," their breakthrough single, gleefully turns stardom inside out, and the rest of the album is either just as funny ("Moving to L.A.," "Good Weekend") or unexpectedly heartfelt ("Emily Kane").

A Band of Bees, "Free the Bees" (Astral-Werks): Paul Butler and Aaron Fletcher expanded their group—known in the U.K. as the Bees—from a duo to a band for the follow-up to "Sunshine Hit Me," their Mercury Prize-nominated début. On the single "Chicken Payback" and elsewhere, the Bees buzz through everything from doo-wop and early soul to classic psychedelia.

Natasha Bedingfield, "Unwritten" (Epic): Add Bedingfield to the list of British pop reliables—like Robbie Williams and Girls Aloud—whom Americans masochistically keep passing up. Catchy, well sung, and cleverly detailed, "Unwritten" is best known for its single, "These Words," a hit song about writing a hit song with the help of "Byron, Shelley, and Keats." It succeeds, actually, because of its elegant R. & B. melody.

Clipse, "We Got It 4 Cheap, Vol. 2" (Mixunit.com): Sometimes mixtapes are like spring training for m.c.s, a way to test their skills for small, devoted audiences. A few, like this self-released CD by the Virginia rappers Clipse, are fully conceived albums that haven't been funded by a major label. Caught in a long and confusing label dispute, Clipse have remained close to their patrons, the production duo the Neptunes, and to their original aesthetic: brutal, pithy, and calmly funny rhymes about dealing cocaine.

DJ Koze, "Kosi Comes Around" (Kompakt): DJ Koze is the working name of Stefan Kozalla, a d.j. and producer from Hamburg. Kozalla begins with the rudiments of the average Kompakt record—a diluted disco beat embellished with many tiny, compressed sounds—and builds a long, unexpectedly compelling series of instrumental tracks that sound, more than anything, like other music being reflected in a wide digital pool.

Heartless Bastards, "Stairs and Elevators" (Fat Possum): Erika Wennerstrom, a sensitive, petite twenty-seven-year-old with a booming voice that's one part Robert Plant and two parts Janis Joplin, leads this Ohio trio through Midwestern blues-rock that begs to be played at top volume. That Wennerstrom laces her songs with unexpected lyrical flourishes only adds to the pleasure.

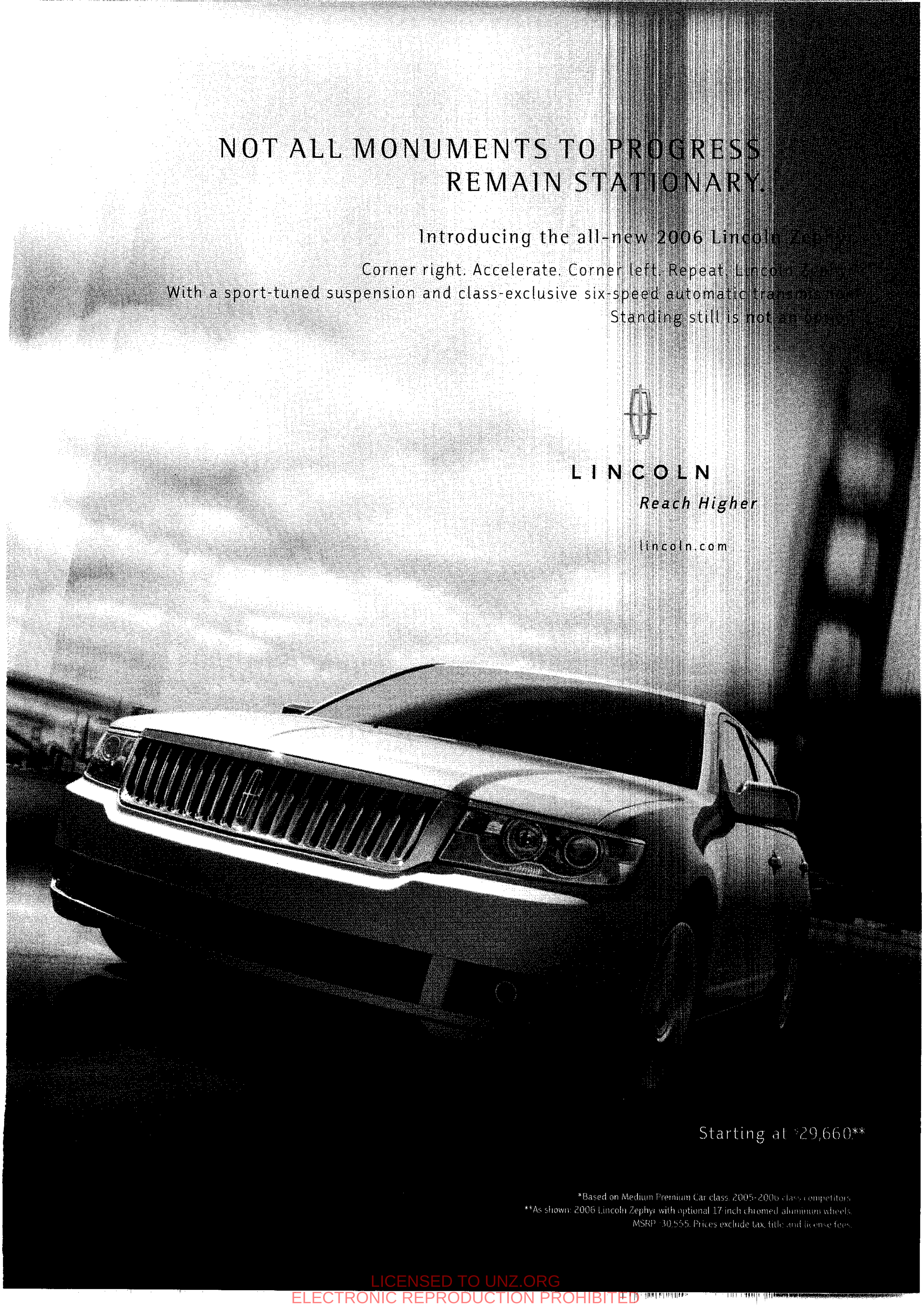
Konono Nº 1, "Congotronics" (Crammed Discs): In Kinshasa, Congo, the septuagenarian *likembé* (or thumb-piano) virtuoso Mawangu Mingiedi hooks his hypnotic instrument to homemade loudspeakers driven by amplifiers crafted from discarded car parts and machinery. Joined by two other *likembé* players and a pair of percussionists, Mingiedi unleashes a series of distorted polyrhythms.

Bettye LaVette, "I've Got My Own Hell to Raise" (Anti): LaVette, who scored a few minor R. & B. hits in the sixties, collaborated with the producer Joe Henry on a set of unlikely covers that includes songs by Fiona Apple and Sinéad O'Connor. LaVette's vocal power is intact and her interpretive skills are far improved.

Brad Paisley, "Time Well Wasted" (Arista Nashville): Paisley may not be the hunkiest, the most intense, or the richest contemporary country star, but he's probably the funniest. The song "Alcohol" takes a gimlet-eyed view of what the philosopher Homer Simpson once called "the cause of, and solution to, all of life's troubles." Elsewhere, Paisley muses on stardom ("Easy Money") and heaven ("When I Get Where I'm Going," a lovely duet with Dolly Parton).

Various artists, "Dimension Mix" (Eenie Meenie): In the sixties, the iconoclastic composer and electronic-music innovator Bruce Haack and the dance teacher and lyricist Esther Nelson issued a string of sweet, mind-altering children's records. This collection, which benefits an autism charity, finds Beck, Stereolab, the Eels, and others reimagining rhyming couplets about spiders, robots, catfish, and other things.

Bill Withers, "Just As I Am" (Sony): Withers's début, from 1971, is a near-perfect album of plainspoken soul that's now available on DualDisc—a gimmicky new format, half-CD, half-DVD, aimed to keep people buying physical objects. The video side includes an intimate excerpt from his 1972 appearance on the British TV show "The Old Grey Whistle Test" in which he discusses his biggest hit from the album, "Ain't No Sunshine": "I just had to forgo my own male ego and admit to losing something, so I came up with this," he says, and then he starts to sing.



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Georges (Daniel Auteuil), is a talk-show host; in the opening minutes, they receive a videotape that suggests that their lives are being scrutinized by a spy. As the fear of being watched intensifies, so the secrets of Georges's past come to light, and the movie, thanks to a gentle and dismaying performance by Maurice Bénichou, as Georges's childhood acquaintance, turns into a pitiless probing of France's colonialist hangover. Some people will find it horribly harsh, especially toward the complacent Georges, and a little prior knowledge of modern French history might be useful; on its own terms, though, the film, not least in the creepiness of its open ending, remains an efficient wrecker of nerves. In French.—*A.L.* (12/26/05 & 1/2/06.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE FAMILY STONE

In this tearjerker of a holiday comedy, an enormous liberal family welcomes its first-born son (Dermot Mulroney) and his nervous, humorless girlfriend, Meredith (Sarah Jessica Parker), home to a lion's den of judgment. The writer and director, Thomas Bezucha, at first refuses to pinpoint his sympathies; each character seems to be just as mean as the next. But when Meredith's socially astute sister (Claire Danes) shows up, the rest of the movie is consumed with the business of everyone's repenting their sins. Though the resolutions lean toward the predictable, the performances are well wrought: Luke Wilson's easygoing brand of humor is well suited to the stoner son, and Parker does an impressive job in a thankless role. But what keeps the film from slipping into sappiness is the estimable Diane Keaton, who brings deep intelligence and a touch of bitterness to the role of the knowing, fallible matriarch.—*Shauna Lyon* (In wide release.)

FATELESS

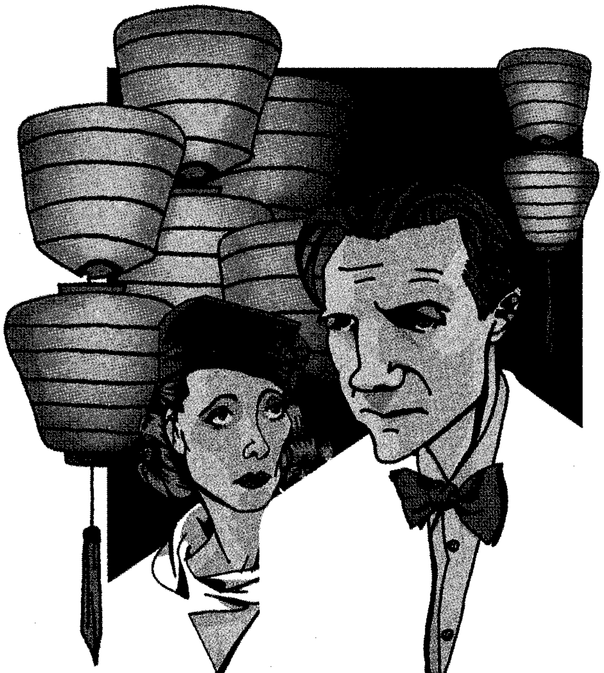
This directorial début by the cinematographer Lajos Koltai is an adaptation of the Nobel Prize winner Imre Kertész's novel about a young Jewish boy's deportation in 1944 from Budapest, his struggle to survive in the concentration camps, and his subsequent surrealistic homecoming. Koltai steers away from dramatic climaxes and paroxysms of violence, but he cannot help tipping the balance with the very lushness of his filmmaking. Both the composition and the color of the images are stirringly beautiful, but they feel loaded with symbolism and sentiment: an emaciated man swaying with exhaustion during an interminable roll call appears to be experiencing a kind of transcendent ecstasy, like Joan of Arc on the pyre. Such loaded moments—as well as Ennio Morricone's insistent score—undercut the deadpan irony and detachment of the screenplay, also by Kertész; nonetheless, the young Marcell Nagy, as the boy, is dispassionate, intelligent, and quietly affecting. In Hungarian, English, and German.—*Marina Harss* (Film Forum.)

KING KONG

The big guy is back—the same chocolate-doughnut nose, seriously mashed, as if he'd been sleeping face down in the jungle for decades, and the matted hair, worn natural as always. The director, Peter Jackson, who co-wrote the screenplay with Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens, returns the pop myth to the Depression year—1933—in which the great original, directed by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack, was made. Naomi Watts is the blonde this time—a starving, eager-to-perform vaudeville actress. When she realizes, in the jungle, that the ape isn't going to hurt her, she does corny vaudeville stuff—cartwheels and juggling and slinky Egyptian moves—and her solitary auditor, clearly amused, grunts and snorts and shifts his weight. Jack Black, rather restrained, is the reckless huckster moviemaker Denham, and Adrien Brody is the nominal hero, though he actually receives less affection from Watts than the ape does. The original and the dreadful 1976 version were about an ape that wants a blonde and can't have her, and a woman who comes to like the big dope; this version is more an impossible match between partners equally in love. Peter Jackson is a master of brilliantly colored fantasy, but the movie, more than three hours long, stops for a dinosaur show on Skull Island, and almost every scene feels padded.—*David Denby* (12/19/05) (In wide release.)

LOVE IS COLDER THAN DEATH

In Rainer Werner Fassbinder's first feature film, from 1969, Franz, a freelance gangster (the grungy Fassbinder himself, then twenty-three), brings Bruno, a pretty-boy gunman (Ulli Lommel, an Alain Delon look-alike) into his ambiguous ménage with the prostitute Johanna (a young and overripe Hanna Schygulla). They track down and rub out a thug who has falsely accused Franz of murder and discover that they like it. Scene after scene and shot after shot recall the French New Wave masterworks that inspired Fassbinder, but the grim humor and the deadpan Brechtian stylings (the film was produced by the director's own so-called "antitheatre" in Munich) are entirely his own. In Fassbinder's blasted post-'68 landscape of lost ideals, the New Wave's philosophical flights of fancy give way to a mannered, proto-punk despair: the stark, cynical view of power relations of sex, money, and violence and the sadomasochistically romantic delight in the resulting cruelties would mark the director's entire meteoric career. In German.—*Richard Brody* (IFC Center, Jan. 7-8.)



James Ivory's "The White Countess," playing at the Paris.

JASHAR AWAN

MRS. HENDERSON PRESENTS

In the nineteen-thirties, Mrs. Laura Henderson (Judi Dench), a fiercely rude and reactionary widow, took over a decrepit London theatre, the Windmill, and hired a Jewish manager-impresario, Vivian Van Damm (Bob Hoskins), to run it. As they alternately charmed and infuriated each other, the unlikely pair managed to stage non-stop musical-review shows for Londoners and then for young soldiers, continuing right through the war as bombs fell on every side. When the competition caught up to them, they hired girls to pose nude, but in static tableaux so as not to alarm the official censor (Christopher Guest). Stephen Frears's new movie, written by Martin Sherman, is a valentine to British vaudeville in a gently risqué period. The picture borders on obviousness and self-love (the gallantry of the theatre people gets a little thick), but Dench and Hoskins go at each other like pros, and the pleasantly undistinguished quality of the musical numbers feels right. Mrs. Henderson, who lost her son in the First World War, apparently had the idea that boys should not die in battle before seeing a beautiful naked girl at least once.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

MUNICH

Steven Spielberg's latest film begins at the Olympic Games in 1972 with the kidnapping and killing of Israeli athletes. It then follows the Israelis' plan to eliminate those whom—rightly or wrongly—they suspect of having backed the attack. Eric Bana plays a Mossad agent who, leaving behind his case officer (Geoffrey Rush) and his pregnant wife (Ayelet Zurer), heads to Europe, where a band of fellow-specialists (Ciarán Hinds, Mathieu Kassovitz, Hanns Zischler, and Daniel Craig) join him in the quest for revenge. This, for all the director's well-oiled narrative skills, is largely a matter of statistics: the film starts to drag as the team works its way through eleven specified targets (plus the slaying of a Dutch hit woman: the most gratuitous scene that Spielberg has ever devised). There has been much inflamed debate over the movie's politics, but the efforts of Spielberg and his screenwriters, Tony Kushner and Eric Roth, to strike a balance—by gesturing to Palestinian grievances or to the assassins' own qualms—leave the film looking agonized and heavy. Good intentions, and a range of strong performances, are never quite enough to quicken the pulse.—*A.L.* (12/26/05 & 1/2/06) (In wide release.)

THE NEW WORLD

On the evidence of this new film, Terrence Malick has lost none of his ability to infuriate and bewitch at the same time. His retelling of the Pocahontas story may be grounded in historical research, but it floats toward the airiness of legend. Colin Farrell plays Captain John Smith, who lands in 1607 at what will become Jamestown, Virginia. There he encounters a young tribal princess (Q'Orianka Kilcher) and falls in love with her—or, rather, with the purity of body and spirit that she enshrines. This lasts until the outbreak of hostilities between the locals and the British; with peace restored, and Smith reassigned, Pocahontas travels to England with her husband, John Rolfe (Christian Bale), and child. This final act is the consummation of the film's concerns, and of its semi-stoned amazement at the world. When Malick (with help from Mozart and Wagner) is at full blast, his peculiarities—the preference for monologue over conversation, and for lyrical meandering over forthright action—somehow fall into place.—*A.L.* (12/26/05 to 1/2/06) (Lincoln Square.)

THE PRODUCERS

Susan Stroman directed the smash Broadway musical that Mel Brooks (along with Thomas Meehan) adapted from his madcap 1968 film about a Broadway producer and his accountant who put on a hopefully doomed Hitler musical after learning they'd make more money from a flop than from a hit. Stroman has now directed its film version, transferring her superb musical numbers and recapturing the brilliant performances of some of the original Broadway cast. Nathan Lane, who stars as the about-to-pop Broadway impresario Max Bialystock, and Matthew Broderick, who plays the nervous, harried accountant Leo Bloom, are a great match, gleefully lobbing verbal volleys at each other. The film begins shakily, but when Broderick steps up for his first big number the sets open up, some tap-dancing beauties are brought out, and the film begins to fly like a great M-G-M musical. No matter how familiar the material may seem, Stroman's intelligent direction reproduces the energy of the original.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

SYRIANA

Stephen Gaghan's tense, outrageously complicated thriller—a major film but not a great one—is about oil, a corrupted C.I.A. that strong-arms for the oil companies, and the politics of the Middle East. The principal players are a large Houston-based oil concern and its Washington law firm; an emirate in the Gulf; an aging C.I.A. field operative (George Clooney); an industry analyst (Matt Damon) based in Europe; a couple of Pakistani oil workers who lose their jobs and wind up in a madrassa; and assorted terrorists, cynical bureaucrats, and bullying legal and corporate types. There is no real protagonist—or, rather, the protagonist is the oil business itself, which gets people killed, tortured, blown up, thrown on the junk heap. Gaghan constructs short, bristling scenes that often end abruptly, with nasty implications hanging in the air. He hops all over the globe, and his method makes it impossible to develop anything in depth (you really have to see this movie twice in order to fully see it once), but he has a sharp tongue, moral urgency, and an amazingly fluent way with actors. With Christopher Plummer, Jeffrey Wright, Amanda Peet, and many, many others.—*D.D.* (12/5/05) (In wide release.)

Also Playing

CASANOVA: In wide release. **THE MATADOR:** In wide release. **MATCH POINT:** In wide release. **MY NAME WAS SABINA SPIELREIN:** Film Forum. **THE WHITE COUNTESS:** Paris.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—"New Filmmakers Gives Dancing Lessons." Jan. 4 at 7: Short-film program. ♦ Jan. 4 at 7: "Dancing Lessons" (2004, Mark Waren).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through Jan. 12: "Essential Hitchcock." Jan. 4 at 1, 4:40, and 8:20: "The Wrong Man" (1956). ♦ Jan. 4 at 3, 6:40, and 10:20: "Rope" (1948). ♦ Jan. 5 at 1:10, 3:40, 7, and 9:30: "Marnie" (1964). ♦ Jan. 6-7 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Vertigo" (1958). ♦ Jan. 8 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30 and Jan. 9 at 1:30 and 3:30: "To Catch a Thief" (1955). ♦ Jan. 9 at 5:30 and 8:40: "Young and Innocent" (1937). ♦ Jan. 9 at 7:10: "Downhill" (1927; silent). ♦ Jan. 10 at 1, 3:20, 5:40, and 8: "Frenzy" (1972).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through Feb. 28: "To Murder the Cinema: The Films of Marguerite Duras." Jan. 10 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "Écrire" (1993, Benoît Jacquot; in French) and "L'Homme Atlantique" (1981, Duras; in French).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"Waverly Midnights." Jan. 6 and 7: "Taxi Driver" (1976, Martin Scorsese). ♦ "Weekend Classics." A series of films by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Jan. 7-8 at noon: "Love Is Colder Than Death" (†) and "The Little Chaos" (1966; in German).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"Artist's Choice: Stephen Sondheim." Jan. 4 at 6 and Jan. 7 at 7:30: "The Organizer" (1963, Mario Monicelli; in Italian). ♦ Jan. 4 at 8:30 and Jan. 6 at 5:30: "The Story of Adele H" (1975, François Truffaut; in French). ♦ Jan. 5 at 6 and Jan. 8 at 2:30: "The Thief" (1967, Louis Malle; in French). ♦ Jan. 5 at 8:30: "The Barbarian Invasions" (2003, Denys Arcand; in French and English). ♦ Jan. 6 at 7:30 and Jan. 7 at 1: "Barry Lyndon" (1975, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ Jan. 7 at 5: "Fires on the Plain" (1959, Kon Ichikawa; in Japanese). ♦ Special screenings. Jan. 4 at 6, Jan. 5 at 8:30, Jan. 6 at 8:45, Jan. 7 at 4:30, Jan. 8 at 5, and Jan. 9 at 8: "Stryker" (2004, Noam Gonick). ♦ "An Evening with Emily Hubley and Others." Jan. 4 at 8: Hubley presents a program of short films, works in progress, and live performance. ♦ Through Jan. 28: "Robert Wise, American Filmmaker." Jan. 7 at 2: "Born to Kill" (†). ♦ Through Feb. 6: "Pixar: 20 Years of Animation." Jan. 7 at 8 and Jan. 8 at 2: "Toy Story 2" (1999, John Lasseter) and short films. ♦ "Early Autumn: Masterworks of Japanese Cinema in the National Film Center, Tokyo." All films are in Japanese. Jan. 8 at 5: "Spring Breeze" (1953, Senkichi Taniguchi). ♦ Jan. 9 at 6: "Love Under the Crucifix" (1962, Kinuyo Tanaka). ♦ Jan. 9 at 8:15: "The Born Fighter" (1966, Seijun Suzuki). ♦ Through Jan. 25: "Asian Cinevisions." Jan. 9 at 6: "Incense" (2003, Ning Hao; in Mandarin).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Special screenings. Jan. 6 at 7:30 and Jan. 8 at 6:30: "2046" (2004, Wong Kar-wai; in Cantonese, Japanese, and Mandarin). ♦ Jan. 7 at 6:30: "Capote" (2005, Bennett Miller). A Q. & A. with the director will follow the screening. ♦ "New York Film Critics Circle Series." Jan. 7 at 1:30 and Jan. 8 at 2: "Hiroshima Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French, Japanese, and English). The Jan. 7 screening will be introduced by Matt Zoller Seitz. ♦ Jan. 7-8 at 4: "The Third Man" (1949, Carol Reed). The Jan. 7 screening will be introduced by John Anderson.

PIONEER CINEMA
155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300)—In revival. Jan. 4 at 9: "Rashomon" (1950, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese). ♦ Films from Croatia. Jan. 5 at 7: "Fine Dead Girls" (2002, Dalibor Matanić; in Croatian). ♦ In revival. Jan. 6 at 7: "Dr. Strangelove" (1964, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ Jan. 6 at 10:45: "Die You Zombie

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Bastards!" (2005, Caleb Emerson). ♦ Jan. 7 at 10:45: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in English and French). ♦ Jan. 9 at 7: "Beauty and the Beast" (1946, Jean Cocteau; in French).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—"Sunshine@Midnight." Jan. 6-7: "Dog Day Afternoon" (1975, Sidney Lumet).

THALIA CINEMA
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—"Thalia Film Classics." Jan. 8 at 7 and Jan. 10 at 6: "Raging Bull" (1980, Martin Scorsese).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—"Cartoon Musicals II." Jan. 4 at 1: "George Pal's Tunes for 'Puppetoons.' " ♦ Jan. 4 at 2:45: "More Warners Cartoon Musicals." ♦ Through Jan. 14: "Dance On Camera." Jan. 4 at 6:15: "Been Rich All My Life" (2005, Heather Lyn MacDonald). ♦ Jan. 4 at 8:30: "Sringaram/Dance of Love" (2005, Sharada Ramanathan; in Tamil). ♦ Jan. 5 at 3:30 and Jan. 6 at 6:15: "Merce Cunningham: A Lifetime of Dance" (2000, Charles Atlas) and short film. The director will introduce the Jan. 6 screening. ♦ Jan. 5 at 6:15 and Jan. 6 at 1: Program 4, short films. ♦ Jan. 5 at 8:30: Program 5, short films. ♦ Jan. 6 at 3:30 and Jan. 7 at 8:30: Program 6, short films. ♦ Jan. 6 at 8:45: Program 7, short films. ♦ Jan. 7 at 1 and Jan. 10 at 3:30: "Ashton at 100: Fred's Steps" (2004, Ross MacGibbon). ♦ Jan. 7 at 4: "The Nutcracker Family: Behind the Magic." (2005, Virginia Brooks). ♦ "Notorious Women: Strippers, In and Out of the Movies." Clips selected by Joanna Ney; program moderated by Rachel Shteir. ♦ Jan. 10 at 1: "Bringing Balanchine Back" (2003, Richard Blanshard) and short films.

READINGS AND TALKS

CORNELIA STREET CAFÉ
The short-story writers Courtney Colwell, Jim Mason, Victoria Somogyi, and Armistead Johnson read from their work. (29 Cornelia St. 212-989-9319. Jan. 4 at 6.)

JOHN PERKINS
The author of "Confessions of an Economic Hit Man," his account of working as an international consultant in the seventies, talks about his time on the world stage. (Barnes & Noble, 4 Astor Pl. No tickets necessary. Jan. 4 at 7.)

WAVE HILL
The botanist Letha Haday visits this bucolic garden and cultural center for a timely talk about how eucalyptus, ginger, rosemary, and other herbs and plants can help keep you healthy. (675 W. 252nd St., the Bronx. 718-549-3200. Jan. 8 at 2.)

"SUNDAYS AT SUNNY'S"
This monthly reading series, held in a Red Hook pub, begins the new year with the novelist Peter Blauner and the memoirist Ayun Halliday. (253 Conover St., between Beard and Reed Sts., Brooklyn. For more information, call 718-875-3677. Jan. 8 at 3.)

JED PERL
The art critic talks with Leon Wieseltier, the literary editor of *The New Republic*. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Jan. 9 at 8.)

LOUIS SACHAR
The author of the children's novel "Holes" reads from his new book, "Small Steps." (The School at Columbia University, 556 W. 110th St. For more information, call 212-875-4550. Jan. 10 at 6:30.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

BIG APPLE CIRCUS
Manhattan's resident one-ring circus winds down its twenty-eighth season this week. Its current show, called "Grandma Goes to Hollywood," stars none other than Grandma the Clown, played (as in years past) by Barry Lubin. The Italian ventriloquist Willer Nicolodi, the Russian trapeze artists of the Garamov Troupe, the English equestrienne Yasmine Smart, and many other performers help Grandma celebrate silent films, romances, comedies, and Westerns. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. 212-721-6500. Through Jan. 8.)

NEW YORK NATIONAL BOAT SHOW
One big attraction this year, at least for those who are just looking, is a collection of boats used in the filming of "Thunderball," "Diamonds Are Forever," "Moonraker," and other James Bond films. The annual display runs through Jan. 8; on Jan. 4 attendees who dress as Agent 007 or as one of the villains from Bond films will receive discounted admission. (Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. between 34th and 39th Sts. For more information, call 212-984-7000.)

THE POND AT BRYANT PARK
The renovation of this midtown park is one of the great success stories of the city's recent revival, but the restoration, which was completed in 1992, apparently left something out—an ice-skating rink. That changed this winter, when a hundred-and-seventy-foot-by-hundred-foot temporary rink was installed on the main lawn. The skating, which is free, continues through Jan. 16. (Sixth Ave. between 40th and 42nd Sts. For more information, visit www.bryantpark.org.)

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

ON THE HORIZON

NIGHT LIFE
ONE NATION
Jan. 12

The new season of Lincoln Center's "American Songbook" series gets under way with the stunning Broadway baritone Brian Stokes Mitchell and continues into the New Year with bluegrass, jazz, and indie-rock acts. (212-721-6500.)

MOVIES
WITHOUT BORDERS
Jan. 15-31

In the series "Bearing the Unbearable," the Thalia Theatre will present Israeli and Palestinian films about the ongoing conflict. Highlights include Elia Suleiman's inventive comedy "Divine Intervention" and Simone Bitton's documentary "Wall." (212-864-5400.)

THE THEATRE
SCREEN TO STAGE
Feb. 10

The new musical "Grey Gardens" is based on the 1975 cult documentary by the Maysles brothers, about Edith Bouvier Beale and her middle-aged daughter, Little Edie, two former society women related to Jackie Kennedy who are living in a crumbling mansion having lost their fortune, and, seemingly, their minds. The musical, with a book by Doug Wright, stars Christine Ebersole and Mary Louise Wilson. (212-279-4200.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
FORCE MAJEURE
Feb. 20-March 23

Verdi's "La Forza del Destino" stretches the conventions of Romantic opera to almost surreal extremes. The Metropolitan Opera has engaged Deborah Voigt, Salvatore Licitra, Mark Delavan, and Samuel Ramey for its latest revival, conducted by Gianandrea Noseda. (212-362-6000.)

ART
GOYA'S LAST WORKS
Feb. 22-May 14

In 1824, Francisco Goya left Spain for exile in Bordeaux, driven out by Fernando VII's persecution of liberals. He was by then in his late seventies, deaf, and infirm but still flooded with ideas; he took up lithography and learned to paint miniatures on ivory. The Frick Collection's exhibit of fifty-one pieces will focus on the work Goya made from that time until his death, in 1828. (212-288-0700.)

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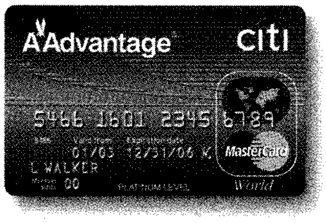

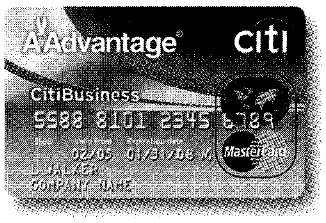

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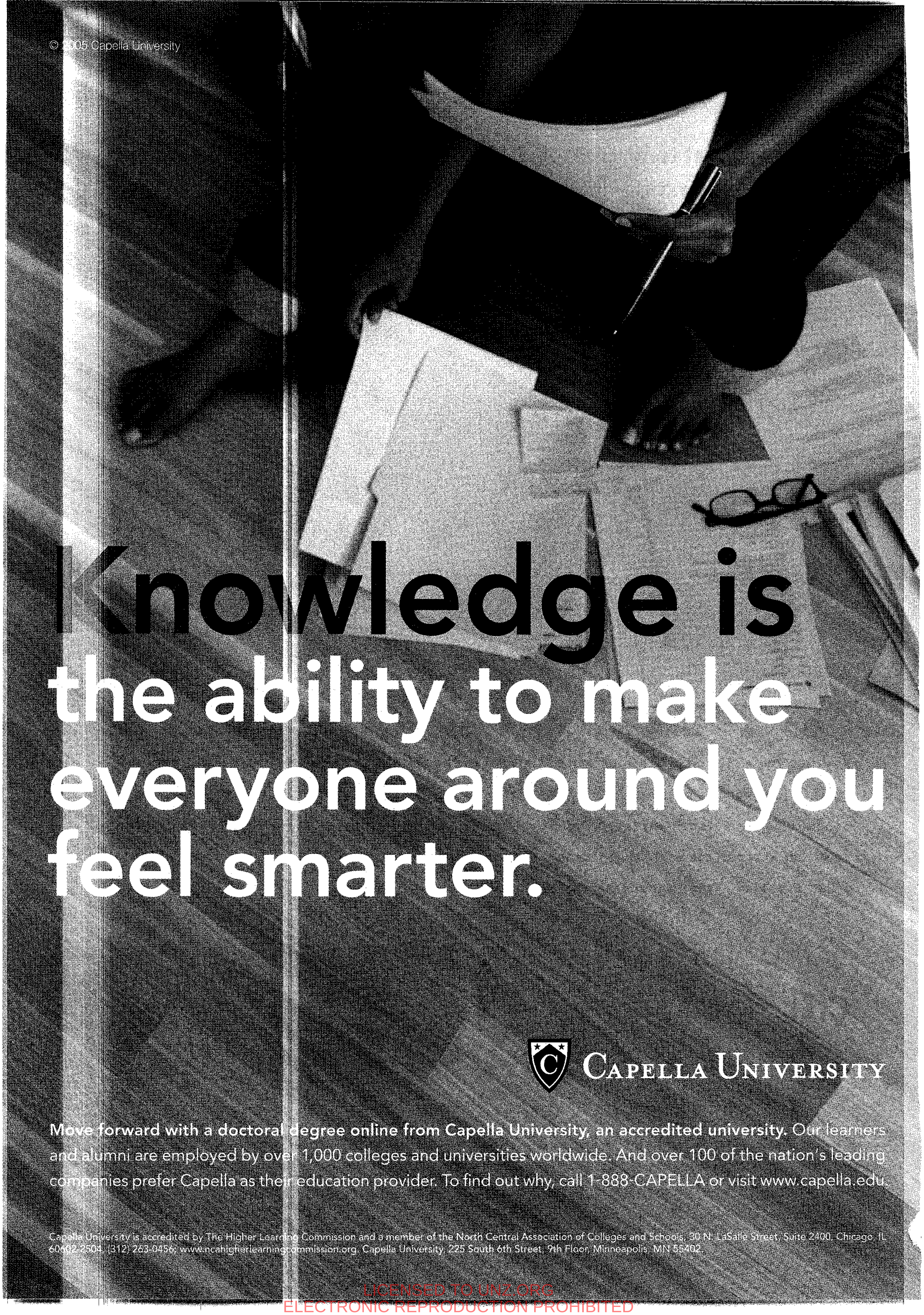
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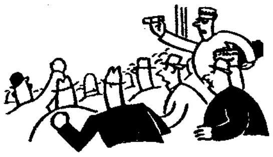
THE
NEW YORKER

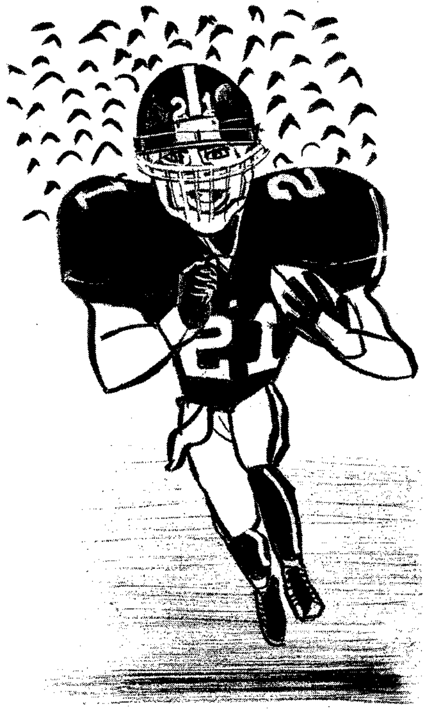
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
UP CLOSE AND NOT PERSONAL

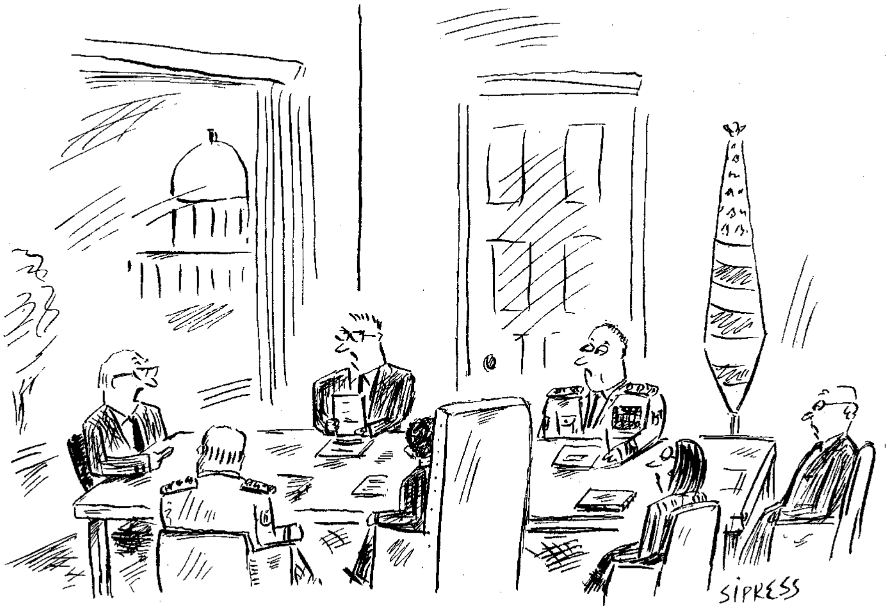


With the bowl games at hand, the N.B.A. and N.H.L. seasons in full flow, the N.F.L. playoffs just ahead, and pitchers-and-catchers a bare six weeks away, sports fans may be wondering once again why all this repletion isn't more satisfying. Sports news abounds, with the talk shows easily outnumbering the games actually being played, but what's missing still is the crazy, cozy old sense of identification that once tied the fan by the set or in the stands to the young athletes out on the field. The attachment was steady until a couple of decades ago, and what did it in wasn't so much salaries or steroids or free agency as the astoundingly changed dimensions and reflexes of the modern player. Professional athletes once looked like somebody we knew, that friendly young fellow down the block who could run fast and dunk the ball or throw it a mile—not us exactly but close enough, and there in the games to represent if not always our town or our college then our *species*. This illusion waned when everyday N.B.A. players grew to six feet eight or better and N.F.L. linemen suddenly averaged two hundred and ninety pounds and could run forty yards in under six seconds. Well, O.K., there was still baseball, where the sweet connection first flourished. Our fathers or grandfathers, at ease in their good grandstand seats behind third base, could look out at Red Schoendienst or Bill Mazeroski or Tom Tresh and think, Well, with a little luck . . . The regulars took home each year just about what a pediatrician or a V.P. for sales or a steady C.P.A. earned. They were us, if we were doing well, in short, and chances were that we'd have succeeded at their game, too, if we'd taken a crack at it. Well, dream on, Gramps—or, as Hemingway's Jake Barnes said, isn't it pretty to think so? Now, in any case, all that's gone. Try to get down near field level before your next ballgame and take a look at Derek Jeter or Jeff Kent or Dontrelle Willis as they stroll by: wow, these guys are enormous.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL



The dream of intimacy—it was always fantasy—is gone, and today's players, so close to us on our plasma screens, are galaxies away from our own doings and capabilities. The loss hurts—no wonder the hosts and guests on the TV sports shows look so angry—and we are casting about to close the distance. If we can bring ourselves to think of professional athletes as rock stars, which they so resemble, we can find them on the wildly popular MTV program "Cribs," which has taken viewers to the lush quarters of Snoop Dogg and Mariah Carey and Missy Elliott (a giant replica of her signature is set in the floor of her front hall), and also to Johnny Damon's home in Tampa, where the dining room features an altered version of "The Last Supper," with the heads of former fellow Red Sox players replacing the Apostles around the table. On various Web sites, we can also find Shaquille O'Neal's lobby-size bed with its Superman-logo bedspread, and the heroic bronze statue of Pudge Rodriguez that decorates his own back yard. Roger Clemens, who has yet to appear on "Cribs," has granted the occasional journalist a visit to his fifteen-thousand-square-foot home in the Piney Point area of Houston, with its Hall of Bats; its floor-to-ceiling golf-ball holders on either side of his study desk, containing three hundred and four golf balls each (one for each course he has



"You know who's a big pain in the ass? Europe."

• •

played to date); and a bedroom that features lighted display cases and a wet bar. Gasping at the stars' enormous pads and rolling acres and their outsized fridges (empty, for the most part, except for the obligatory bottle of Cristal) and snickering at such monumental garishness and infantile taste is all right for the sub-twenty age group that "Cribs" aims at, but it's still not what we fans are after. What we yearn for may be contained in the question that every sportswriter keeps hearing from his readers: "What's Willie Mays"—or Phil Mickelson or Andy Roddick—"really like?" Willie, as it happens, is cranky and private in person (he's seventy-four years old) and passably complex, but this news, of course, is not what's wanted. The desired, almost the demanded, answer is that he's a great guy: he's exactly like us.

The *Times*, on a recent Saturday, featured an extended visit to the New York apartment of Tiki Barber, now in his ninth year as the featured running back for the New York Giants. Barber, a known sports good guy, is thirty and on the edge of superstardom, and here he was, with that shaved head and sweet smile, at play with his twenty-one-month-old son, Chason, and then with his feet up on an ottoman, gabbing with his animated wife, Ginny. Their four-thousand-square-foot apartment has a twelve-foot-high trophy case, a flat-screen TV in every room, and space for a private suite for Ginny's parents, but in the story it felt modest enough to allow a sports-fan reader to feel right at home, even familiar. Nice place, Tiki, but this striped, nail-head bench—what were you *thinking*? And that bedroom for Chason's three-year-old brother, A.J.—do you want a kid growing toward his teens staring at a mural every day where he's holding up a sign that says "Go Tiki #21!" C'mon!

This sense of wry palship, a *Schadenfreude dekorative*, lasted for local fans right up until kickoff time, late that same afternoon, when Tiki Barber and the Giants took on the visiting Kansas City Chiefs at the Meadowlands, and beat them, 27–17, to put themselves one game away from clinching the National Football Conference East division. There was plenty of Tiki to watch and yell over. He is midsized and not particularly fast as running backs go, but here he was, again cruising close to his blockers and then finding the hole or the invisible seam and driving for yardage before disappearing under a vanload of tacklers. The Giants scored a couple of field goals and a touchdown on a pass from Eli Manning to Amani Toomer, but the play of the day was a second-quarter run by Tiki, around the left side and then brilliantly back and forth between grasping and flying frustrated Chief defensemen, forty-one yards, for a touchdown. He ran some more after that, driving in for the twenty-yard clinching touchdown late in the day—it was night by now, and you kept your eye on his gleaming blue helmet in motion, always a little lower than the rest. In the end, he'd run two hundred and twenty yards from scrimmage—and away from us, you might say—for a franchise record, and had compiled 1,577 rushing yards for the season, breaking the team record he set last year. Great game, Tiki. Out of sight.

—*Roger Angell*

ACADEMICS DEPT.
THE LATTE CLASS

On the train up from Philadelphia the other day, Bryant Simon, a professor of history at Temple University, overheard two conversations about Starbucks. When he reached Penn Station, he made a pit stop at the Starbucks at Thirty-fifth Street and Seventh Avenue. Then he began walking toward Grand Central, to catch a Metro-North train uptown, and passed a group of kids on the street, also talking about Starbucks. ("I guess a lot of people like twelve-dollar coffee," one said.) He was headed for the corner of 125th Street and Lenox Avenue: the site of Harlem's only Starbucks.

Simon, who is forty-four, is writing a book—a cross between "Bowling Alone" and "Fast Food Nation," he hopes—about the world's largest, and seemingly unavoidable, coffee-shop chain, which he has called "the corner bar of the twenty-first century." Over the past year, he estimates that he's been to three hundred Starbucks outlets in six countries. He sits in Starbucks for at least twelve hours a week, observing. In the course of his research, Simon has detected the occasional regional variation—in Guadalajara, for example, the Starbucks offers valet parking. But a few basic and universal mores hold true: moms predominate in late morning, teens take over after 3 P.M., and strangers who are not moms or teens must never engage one another.

At the 125th Street Starbucks, Simon

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quickly noticed a couple of irregularities, such as the hoop earrings belonging to one barista ("She shouldn't be allowed to wear those") and the lack of any ambient music or CDs for purchase. (Simon has obtained a copy of the employees' manual, and is contemplating applying for a summer job.) The store was busy and cramped—too cramped, he thought—and lacked the usual niceties like upholstered furniture. The dinginess struck him as more than coincidence. "It's a classic American story," he said. "African-Americans get less of everything."

Simon and a guest each ordered regular coffees, size Grande. All the tables were occupied, so they waited by the milk dispensers until a man in overalls sitting near the window got up and, in apparent violation of Starbucksian etiquette, approached. "There's a chair right here, and a chair right there," the man said, pointing at a couple of empty seats about ten feet apart. "Come on, it's a community thing."

Maybe it was a corner bar, after all. Simon took a seat by an elderly woman and a younger one. "I don't actually know very much about coffee," he confessed, glancing at the menu of specialty drinks on the wall. "I've ordered a mocha Frappuccino before, and hot chocolate. But most of this stuff just sounds gross."

As he sat, and only occasionally sipped, Simon flipped through a composition book, where he records his Starbucks data. Unlike the man in overalls, Simon prefers not to approach strangers while in Starbucks ("It's a biased sample"), so, to pass the time, he often counts customers. On one page, from a stop in Singapore, he'd noted forty-eight people between 2:22 P.M. and 3:40 P.M.; all but six stayed and sat. In downtown Philly, by contrast, he saw forty-four in a twenty-one-minute span, thirty-three of whom ordered their drinks to go.

Simon has a number of Starbucks informants, such as his best friend's niece, a twelve-year-old in Brooklyn Heights. "She calls it Flirtbucks," he said. "She doesn't drink coffee—she's afraid it'll stunt her growth—but boys try to impress her by drinking coffee drinks." In Brooklyn Heights, apparently, it is cool to go to Starbucks if you are eleven or twelve, but not once you turn fourteen. "Whereas along the Main Line near Philadelphia, it remains hip until about age twenty," Simon said.

Back at the Harlem branch, a man gestured toward a plastic bag full of electronics on the floor. "Can I interest you in some headphones?" he asked. Simon declined, and pulled out his computer. He demonstrated that access to Starbucks.com is free, whereas IHateStarbucks.com, say, and StarbucksGossip.com require a T-Mobile account. Aficionados of the latter Web site may be aware of the existence of Winter, another man with a special interest in Starbucks. Winter aims to visit every Starbucks in the world, a feat that does not interest Simon. (Winter's record of twenty-nine Starbucks visited in one day surpasses Simon's sixteen.) "They open, like, three to four stores a day," he said. "To me it just seems like, what's the guy—is it Sisyphus?—who's pushing the rock up the hill?"

Simon has a twenty-minute rule of thumb: if you stay at Starbucks twenty minutes or less, you're drinking; more than twenty minutes, you're working. After an hour or so, he excused himself to visit the restroom, which he later deemed unimpressive. ("The mirror cost, like, $2.99.") His cup remained about half full.

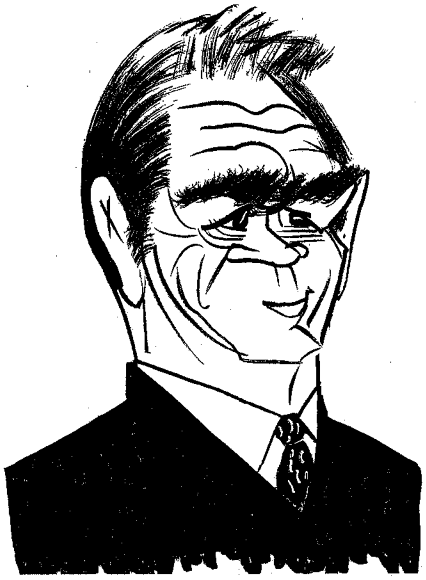
—*Ben McGrath*

THE PICTURES

LUNCH WITH TOMMY LEE

Tommy Lee Jones, actor, producer, and first-time big-screen director, was having lunch the other day at The Players club, in Gramercy Park. Jones appears in his new movie, "The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada," as a gray-bearded, sun-fried Texas rancher named Pete. He wears scuffed boots and dirty jeans. He speaks Spanish as well as English. He plays the loyal friend of an illegal Mexican immigrant who is mysteriously murdered. Now out of character, Jones, clad in dark Prada and Hermès, looked clean-shaven and barbered. He chose to sit downstairs, in the Grill Room, near an old pool table and a huge fireplace.

Jones pressed his large hands flat against his cheekbones. "It's been a rough six weeks, travelling with the film. We've been to France, Toronto, and Morelia, in Mexico. In Japan, I took three days for myself, to go to Kyoto, one of my favorite cities in all the world. Then to New York, to talk to journalists, I guess we call them." He grinned and held it. "I went to an interview with Charlie Rose," he said. "You go in there, and it's all dark, except for the light directed on the table. It looked very much like an execution chamber." He took a sip of the Bloody Mary he had ordered. "I'm happy to be here," he said. "The main thing is, I feel at home in New York. It's open-minded and openhearted."



Tommy Lee Jones

A former president of The Players, the British actor Michael Allinson, who is well remembered as the imposing Rolls-Royce passenger in the Grey Poupon commercials, came over, bowed, and held out a formal hand to Jones. "Absolutely delighted to see you," he said, with royal British diction.

"Thank you, sir," Jones said, shaking the hand.

"And you've just—?" Allinson said.

"Finished a new film," Jones said.

Allinson looked overcome. "Oh, how wonderful!" he said. He bowed again. "I must see it."

Jones's wife, Dawn, was the still photographer for the movie. His fourteen-year-old daughter, Victoria, plays a young Mexican girl. "She's a good actress, has her SAG card, speaks impeccable Spanish," Jones said. "When she was a baby, I told Leticia, her nurse, to speak to her in Spanish. But I fired my daughter. She had to get up at 5 A.M. for her part. One morning, she wouldn't get out of bed. I said, 'Honey, this is work.' But she wouldn't budge. So I fired her. Then, without telling me, the production staff went over and woke her and rushed her out to the set just in time."

When he's not filming, Jones spends his time playing polo, not only on a ranch he has in Texas but on a seventy-four-acre equestrian facility near Buenos Aires. "The movie business has hurt my polo," he said. "To realize your full potential, you have to play year-round." Jones also owns fifty acres in Wellington, Florida, on the edge of the Everglades.

"I cleared the wetlands of invasive plants, and now we grow pineapples, mangoes, papaya, peppers, and ten different kinds of bananas, including those little red Indian ones—they're the best," Jones said. "We have a lot of animals, but there's no anthropomorphizing. We don't put little ballet dresses on the dogs or kiss them on the mouth. I respect animals. I don't insult them.

"We've built a world-class polo field and a practice field there, so my team and the kids' teams can play. My daughter has been playing polo since she was six, and now she's entirely fearless. She sometimes plays six chukkers." He went on, "Dawn is one of the best women polo players in the country. And she didn't even know how to ride a horse ten years ago."

After lunch, Jones said that he was going to Tribeca to look in on his sister-in-law, Deborah Laurel, an architect, who has designed his grooms' quarters in Florida. "It has a beautiful recreation space with a stretch of bare wall behind the sofa, and I want to ask Deborah to put up the head of a longhorn that used to live on an old ranch of mine," he said.

On the ride downtown, Jones said that he wanted to buy the rights to Ernest Hemingway's book "Islands in the Stream." "I might get my son Austin, who is twenty-two and studying writing at Vermont College, to help me write the screenplay," he said. "Good father-and-son stuff." He waited a beat and added, "I don't think I'm too old to play Thomas Hudson."

Good idea. Hemingway would have liked it.

—*Lillian Ross*

HOUSING DEPT.
ÉMIGRÉS

One recent Saturday afternoon, some three hundred and sixty years after Dutch settlers chartered the town of Breuckelen, representatives of a more recent migration were milling around the back patio of one of the borough's newer bars. They had come to toast the first birthday of Brownstoner, a blog professing "an unhealthy obsession with historic Brooklyn brownstones and the neighborhoods and lifestyles they define." The party was in Red Hook, Brooklyn's defunct dock district, so there were no brownstones in sight, but the bar's name (Pioneer Bar-B-Q) and the up-and-coming character of the neighborhood (Ikea and Fairway due to arrive soon) fit the spirit of the occasion.

Brownstoner is a virtual back fence for Brooklyn real-estate watchers. In frequent postings, its users vet listings, trade tips on brokers and neighborhoods, and gossip about who saw what at which open house. "That place is a 'five minute walk to Prospect Park' only if you're a giraffe," Linusvanpelt wrote recently. "Why is the Chester Court listing so relatively affordable?" Clinton hillbilly said. "Was someone murdered there or something?"

The blog's founder, who works on Wall Street and who last year bought a fixer-upper in Clinton Hill, is known to readers as Brownstoner; his wife is Mrs. Brownstoner, or Mrs. B. Like Mr. and Mrs. B., most of the guests at the party were in their thirties; many wore expensive jeans and sneakers, and a disproportionate number of them had on eyeglasses with square frames. They travelled in pairs, towing a stroller and a child or two, and lived in neighborhoods that they described in optimistic tones as "improving," including not only Clinton Hill but also Windsor Terrace, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Crown Heights.

The group had its own vernacular, sprinkled with terms like "pocket door," "parquet," "gut reno," "Farrow & Ball" (a brand of English paint with extra pigment), and the verb "to rehab" (as in, "I bought a single-family house from a Louisiana minister. There were illegal tenants, one of whom died in contract. And then I rehabbed it"). Some expressed feelings of connection to a bygone era. One woman on her move to Clinton Hill: "I was reading a lot of Edith Wharton last summer, and it seemed so appropriate."

As Beck played over the loudspeakers and children tossed horseshoes, adults drank bottles of Stella Artois, gnawed on ribs, and compared notes about their paths to the outer boroughs. "It was my dream, when I first found Brooklyn, to own a brownstone," one transplant from Manhattan to Crown Heights by way of Park Slope said. "I didn't think that Brooklyn was cool enough at first," an industrial designer said. "But it's, like, the cool borough right now." "We really wanted to be in Clinton Hill," said his wife, a writer, describing their house hunt. "Unfortunately, we were two years too late to really find a beater."

There was much talk about the shoddy upkeep and, some said, bad taste that had been visited on the brownstones during the twentieth century. "That's one nice thing about neighborhoods like Clinton Hill, where we live," Brownstoner said. "No one ever had any money." His wife jumped in. "It was, you know, basically a crack house, and it was covered in weird linoleum and industrial carpeting," she said. "But when you peeled it back you got this incredible parquet. And then there were the mantels."

An exchange between Brownstoner and the buyer of a house in Windsor Terrace went like this:

W.T.: It's a three-story.

Mr. B.: With a rounded front?

W.T.: It's like a pointed bay.

Mr. B.: Uh-huh.

W.T.: And it was totally seventies Italian, you know—plastic-wood panelling everywhere and orange carpet and dropped ceilings.

MR. B.: Wow.

BYSTANDER: I never understood the dropped ceiling.

MRS. B.: I know! What is it?

W.T.: The modern look, I guess. Or maybe for saving on heating?

Discussion of money matters proved only slightly more circumspect in person than online. "Crown Heights and Bed-Stuy are seven, eight, and nine-hundred thousand dollars," the Crown Heights buyer said. "Clinton Hill would be 1.5. And Park Slope would be 1.8." There was also talk about how rising prices affected the neighborhoods' demographics. "The diversity of the architecture and the people who live in Clinton Hill is peerless," Nathaniel Frank, an academic, said. "I saw a study which said that, counter-intuitively, gentrification doesn't necessarily lead to displacement. People make ends meet somehow; they double up, if they want to stay. They appreciate the neighborhood as different."

Among the guests at the Pioneer, only Lee Coker-Holmes (Nativegal, on the blog) said that she was Brooklyn-born and bred. She expressed mild bemusement at some of the interlopers, and at the labels they had affixed to various neighborhoods. "I would say I grew up in Fort Greene," she said. "But people on Brownstoner are, like, no, that's Bed-Stuy. So I'm, like, O.K., fine. I can't argue about that, because when I lived there they were both ghettos."

—*Kate Julian*

STRIKE POSTCARD
GETTING WHERE?

And on the second day spam arrived. It read, "New Meditation CDs Equip Professionals Around the World to Conquer Daily Tasks with Zeal and Confidence." Glad to hear it, but this did not address the problem of getting to and from work. If meditation had wheels and could sneak through checkpoints—if it could fit four—surely people would be taking it to the office. Otherwise, forget it. Thirty hours into the transit strike, the first here in twenty-five years, zeal and confidence, in abundance at the beginning, had already started to fade. Conveyance-deprivation was by then a numbing fact, along with cold air and the realization that for a while—there was a sense, in the early stages, that it might last weeks, rather than days—nearly every conversation would begin more or less the same way.

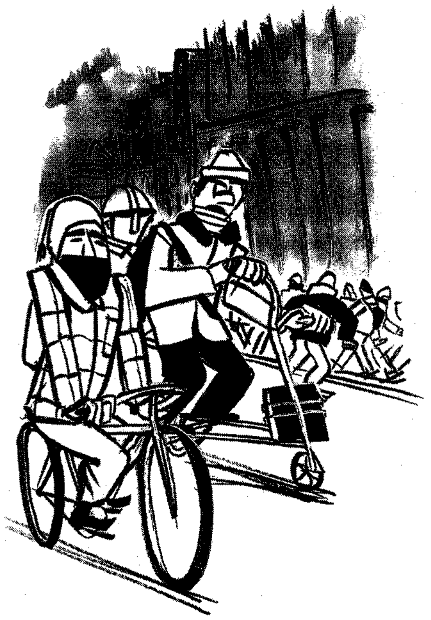
Breathe deep. "Sunnyside, Queens, to Wall Street. It took me two hours. I got to work at ten and left an hour ago, at four. I've had a hard day, man." This one was a stockbroker, riding back up Madison Avenue, toward the Queensborough Bridge, on a device called the Trikke, a sort of V-shaped Siamese scooter with three wheels and swivelling action. "It sucks for going uphill," he said, polyurethane wheels clattering along the pocked and rutted avenue.

Madison, like Fifth, was closed to regular traffic, to make way for emergency vehicles and shuttle buses, but an ad-hoc pack of self-propelled vehicles had formed. They pulled up alongside one another when the signals went red; brief what's-your-situation dialogues sprouted up, and then the light changed, and the riders—several bicyclists, a couple of Rollerbladers, two pedicabbies, the Trikker—wished each other luck and pushed on, at varying speeds. On the downhills, the bladers caught up to the bikers. Over time, the pedicabs fell far behind. You could get around.

Earlier, the empty avenues had been lovely to behold, as on a snow day. But then it got dark, and the evening commute kicked in. The march home turned grim, the exhilaration of an extraordinary event giving way to doggedness and resignation. It was the second-shortest day of the year, the eve of the solstice.

There may be something Parisian about a crippling municipal strike, but the East River bridges at night do not make one think of the Seine. The approach to the Queensborough, on the Manhattan side, is sooty and forbidding and not very amenable to loitering. Along Fifty-ninth Street, people walked among the cars, peering into them, hoping for a ride. They included a pair of young men, one carrying a skateboard, the other a square of cardboard on which he'd written "Astoria." The one with the sign hadn't had to work, but he'd hitched a ride in early, just to see the town in its hour of disarray. He'd gone to a couple of movies. His friend, who worked as a sales assistant at Holtzbrinck and was headed for Jackson Heights, was considering skipping work the next day. "I'm a little sick," he said, tentatively. After a moment, the door to a white van swung open. A woman's voice called out, "Astoria! Astoria!" and the two young men scooted inside.

There was a pod of ride-seekers at the on-ramp to the bridge, and therefore some sudden and awkward clots caused by obliging drivers, but most Queens-bound commuters were resigned to crossing on foot. One of them was a little girl in a shiny turquoise snowsuit, with flashing lights on her shoes. Her mother, heavily bundled, said that the girl was seven and had just been given a diagnosis of pneumonia. They'd come in from Astoria to see some doctors—one on the Upper East Side, another on the Upper West Side, a third near the South Street Seaport—and had got around town by buying an all-day pass on a double-decker tour bus, which had last left them by the United Nations. From there they'd walked to the bridge. They were weary, and still a ways from home, but the mother preferred walking to taking a chance on a ride with a stranger. "Frankly, I'm scared," she said. They trundled toward the bridge's peak. This would be their only time, a slog to remember. The next day, they were going to Pennsylvania, and, the day after that, the strike was over.



—*Nick Paumgarten*

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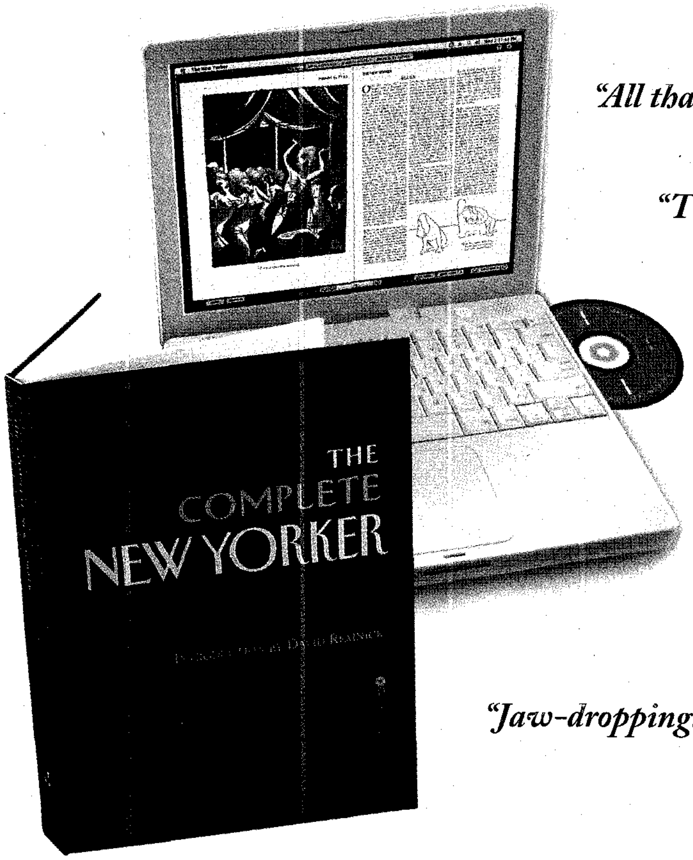

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ANNALS OF SCIENCE

BUTTERFLY LESSONS

Insects and toads respond to global warming.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

Polygonia c-album, generally known as the comma butterfly, spends most of its life pretending to be something else. In its larval, or caterpillar, stage, it has a chalky stripe down its back which makes it look uncannily like a bird dropping. As an adult, with wings folded, it is practically indistinguishable from a dead leaf. The comma gets its name from a tiny white mark shaped like the letter "c" on its underside. Even this is thought to be part of its camouflage—an ersatz rip of the sort that leaves get when they are particularly old and tatty.

The comma is a European butterfly—its American cousins are the hop merchant and the question mark—and it can be found in France, where it is known as *le Robert-le-Diable;* Germany, where it is called *der C-Falter;* and the Netherlands, where it is *gehakkelde aurelia.* The comma reaches the northern edge of its distribution in Britain. This is unremarkable—many European butterflies come to the end of their range in England—but from a scientific standpoint fortunate.

The English have been watching and collecting butterflies for centuries—some of the specimens in the British Natural History Museum date back to the seventeen-hundreds—and in the Victorian era passion for the hobby was such that even many small towns supported their own entomological societies. In the nineteen-sixties, Britain's Biological Records Centre decided to marshal this enthusiasm for a project called the Lepidoptera Distribution Maps Scheme, whose aim was to chart precisely where each of the country's fifty-nine native species could—and could not—be found. More than two thousand butterfly enthusiasts participated, and in 1984 the results were collated into a hundred-and-fifty-eight-page atlas. Every species got its own map, with black dots showing where it had been sighted. On the map for *Polygonia c-album*, the comma's range was shown to extend from the south coast of England up to Liverpool in the west and Norfolk in the east. Almost immediately, the map became out of date; in the years that followed, hobbyists kept finding the comma in new areas. By the late nineteen-nineties, the butterfly was frequently being sighted in the north of England, near Durham. By now, it is established in southern Scotland, and has been sighted as far up as the Highlands. The rate of the comma's expansion—some fifty miles per decade—was described by the authors of the most recent butterfly atlas as "remarkable."

JOOST SWARTE

Chris Thomas is a biologist at the University of York who studies lepidoptera. He is tall and rangy, with an Ethan Hawke-style goatee and an amiably harried manner. The day I met him, he had just returned from looking for butterflies in Wales, and the first thing he said to me when I got into his car was please not to mind the smell of wet socks. A few years ago, Thomas, his wife, their two sets of twins, an Irish wolfhound, a pony, some rabbits, two cats, and several chickens moved into an old farmhouse in the village of Wistow, in the Vale of York. The University of York has an array of thermostatic chambers where commas are raised under temperature-controlled conditions, fed carefully monitored diets, and measured on a near-constant basis, but, in the spirit of British amateurism, Thomas decided to turn his own back yard into a field lab. He scattered wildflower seeds he had collected from nearby meadows and ditches, planted nearly seven hundred trees, and waited for the butterflies to show up. When I visited the place in midsummer, the wildflowers were in bloom and the grass was so high that many of the tiny trees looked lost, like kids in search of their parents. The Vale of York is almost completely flat—during the last ice age, it formed the bottom of a giant lake—and from the yard Thomas pointed out the spires of Selby Abbey, built nearly a thousand years ago, and also the cooling towers of the Drax power plant, Britain's largest, some ten miles away. It was cloudy, and since butterflies don't generally fly when it's gray, we went inside.

Butterflies, Thomas explained after putting the kettle on for tea, can be divided into two groups. The so-called "specialists" require specific—in some cases unique—conditions. Specialists include the chalkhill blue (*Polyommatus coridon*), a large turquoise butterfly that feeds exclusively on horseshoe vetch, and the purple emperor (*Apatura iris*), which flies in the treetops of well-wooded areas in southern England. The "generalists" are less picky. Among Britain's generalists, there are, in addition to the comma, ten species that are widespread in the southern part of the country and reach the edge of their range somewhere in the nation's midsection. "Every single one has moved northward since 1982," Thomas told me. A few years ago, with lepidopterists from, among other places, the United States, Sweden, France, and Estonia, Thomas conducted a survey of all the studies that had been done on generalists that reach the northern limits of their ranges in Europe. The survey looked at thirty-five species in all. Of these, the scientists found, twenty-two had shifted their range northward in recent decades; only one had shifted south.

After a while, the sun emerged, and we went back outside. Thomas's wolfhound, Rex, a dog the size of a small horse, trailed behind us, panting heavily. Within about five minutes, Thomas had identified a meadow brown (*Maniola jurtina*), a small tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*), and a green-veined white (*Pieris napi*), all species that have been flitting around Yorkshire since butterfly record-keeping began. Thomas also spotted a gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*) and a small skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*), which until recently had been confined to a region south of where we were standing. "So far, two out of the five species of butterflies that we've seen are northward invaders," he told me. "Sometime within the last thirty years they have spread into this area." A few minutes later, he pointed out another invader sunning itself in the grass—a *Polygonia c-album*. With its wings closed, the comma was a dull, dead-leaf brown, but with them open it was a brilliant orange.

That life on earth changes with the climate has been assumed to be the case for a long time—indeed, for very nearly as long as the climate has been known to be capable of changing. In 1840, Louis Agassiz published "Études sur les Glaciers," the work in which he laid out his theory of the ice ages. By 1859, Charles Darwin had incorporated Agassiz's theory into his own theory of evolution. Toward the end of "On the Origin of Species," in a chapter titled "Geographical Distribution," Darwin describes the vast migrations that he supposes the advance and retreat of the glaciers must have necessitated:

> As the cold came on, and as each more southern zone became fitted for arctic beings and ill-fitted for their former more temperate inhabitants, the latter would be supplanted and arctic productions would take their places. The inhabitants of the more temperate regions would at the same time travel southward. . . . As the warmth returned, the arctic forms would retreat northward, closely followed up in their retreat by the productions of the more temperate regions. And as the snow melted from the bases of the mountains, the arctic forms would seize on the cleared and thawed ground, always ascending higher and higher, as the warmth increased, whilst their brethren were pursuing their northern journey.

The last of the great ice sheets retreated some ten thousand years ago, at the start of the Holocene. At that point, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere stood at two hundred and sixty parts per million. Give or take twenty parts per million, it remained at that level through the invention of agriculture, the founding of the first cities, the building of the pyramids, and the discovery of the New World. When, in the early eighteen-hundreds, coal-burning began to drive up CO_2 levels, they rose at first gradually—it took more than a century to reach three hundred parts per mil-

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In September, Rolex Watch U.S.A. treated participants of the Rolex International Keelboat Championship to a gorgeous night under the stars at their exclusive Rolex Crew Party. The event was co-hosted for the third year by Rolex, *The New Yorker* Promotion Department, Condé Nast Media Group, and select Condé Nast magazines; guests enjoyed food, drinks, and live music in picturesque Annapolis, Maryland, at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. The title sponsor of the regatta since its inception, in 1985, Rolex continues to be a committed supporter of women's athletics.

ROLEX

lion—and later, following the Second World War, much more rapidly. By 1965, CO_2 concentrations had reached three hundred and twenty parts per million; by 1985, three hundred and forty-six parts per million; and, by 2005, three hundred and seventy-eight parts per million. If current trends continue, it will reach five hundred parts per million (nearly double pre-industrial levels) by the middle of this century, and could reach as much as seven hundred and fifty parts per million (nearly triple pre-industrial levels) by 2100. The equilibrium warming associated with doubled CO_2 is estimated to be between three and a half and seven degrees, and with tripled CO_2 between six and eleven degrees. A global temperature rise of just three degrees would render the earth hotter than it has been at any point in the past two million years.

This vast geophysical experiment is a biological one as well. Darwin never imagined that the effects of climate change could be observed in a human lifetime, yet, almost anywhere you go in the world today, it is possible to observe changes comparable to the northern expansion of the comma. A recent study of common frogs living near Ithaca, New York, for example, found that four out of six species were calling, which is to say mating, at least ten days earlier than at the start of the nineteen-hundreds, while at the Arnold Arboretum, in Boston, the peak blooming date for spring-flowering shrubs has advanced, on average, by eight days. In Costa Rica, birds like the keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*), once confined to the lowlands and foothills, have started to nest on mountain slopes; in the Alps, plants like purple saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*) and Austrian draba (*Draba fladnizensis*) have been creeping up toward the summits; and in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California the average Edith's checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha*) is now found at an elevation three hundred feet higher than it was a hundred years ago. To what extent life on earth will be transformed by the warming expected in the coming years is, at this point, still a matter of speculation. Clearly, though, the process has begun.

The Bradshaw-Holzapfel lab occupies a corner on the third floor of Pacific Hall, a peculiarly unlovely building on the campus of the University of Oregon, in Eugene. At one end of the lab is a large room stacked with glassware, and at the other end is a trio of offices. In between are several workrooms that look, from the outside, like walk-in refrigerators. Taped to the door of one of them is a handwritten sign: "Warning—If you enter this room mosquitoes will suck your blood out through your eyes!"

William Bradshaw and Christina Holzapfel, who run the lab and share one of the offices, are evolutionary geneticists. They met as graduate students at the University of Michigan, and have been married for thirty-four years. Bradshaw is a tall man with thinning gray hair and a gravelly voice. His desk is covered in a mess of papers, books, and journals, and when visitors come to the lab he likes to show them his collection of curiosities, which includes a desiccated octopus. Holzapfel is short, with blond hair and bright-blue eyes. Her desk is perfectly neat.

Bradshaw and Holzapfel have shared an interest in mosquitoes for as long as they've been interested in each other. In the early years of their lab, which they set up in 1971, they raised several different species, some of which, in order to reproduce, required what is delicately referred to as a "blood meal." This, in turn, demanded a live animal able to provide such a meal. For a time, this requirement was met by rats anesthetized with phenobarbital, but, as rules about experimenting with animals grew more stringent, Bradshaw and Holzapfel found themselves forced to decide whether it was more humane to keep anesthetizing the same rat over and over or to use a new rat and let the old one wake up to find itself covered with bites. Eventually, they decided to stick to a single species, *Wyeomyia smithii*, which needs no blood in order to reproduce. At any given moment, the Bradshaw-Holzapfel lab houses upward of a hundred thousand *Wyeomyia smithii* in various stages of development.

Wyeomyia smithii is a small and rather ineffectual bug. ("Wimpy" is how Bradshaw characterizes it.) Its eggs are practically indistinguishable from specks of dust; its larvae appear as minuscule white wrigglers. As an adult, it is about a quarter of an inch long and in flight looks like a tiny black blur. Only when you examine a *Wyeomyia smithii* very closely, under a magnifying glass, can you see that its abdomen is actually silver and that its two hind legs are bent gracefully above its head, like a trapeze artist's.

Wyeomyia smithii completes virtually its entire life cycle—from egg to larva to pupa to adult—inside a single plant, *Sarracenia purpurea*, or, as it is more commonly known, the purple pitcher plant. The purple pitcher plant, which grows in swamps and peat bogs from Florida to northern Canada, has frilly, cornucopia-shaped leaves that sprout directly out of the ground and then fill with water. In the spring, female *Wyeomyia smithii* lay their eggs one at a time, carefully depositing them in different pitcher plants. When ants and flies and, occasionally, small frogs drown in the leaves of the pitcher plant, their remains provide nutrients not only for the plant—*Sarracenia purpurea* is carnivorous—but also for developing mosquito larvae. (*Sarracenia purpurea* does not digest its own food; it leaves this task to bacteria, which don't attack the mosquitoes.) Once the young mature into adults, they repeat the whole process, and, if conditions are right, the cycle can be completed four or five times in a single summer. Come fall, the adult mosquitoes die off, but the larvae live on through the winter in a state of suspended animation known as diapause—the insect version of hibernation.

The exact timing of diapause is critical to the survival of *Wyeomyia smithii* and also to Bradshaw and Holzapfel's research. When the larvae perceive that day length has dropped below a certain threshold, they stop growing and molting; when they perceive that it has lengthened sufficiently, they take up where they left off.

This light threshold, which is known as the critical photoperiod, varies from bog to bog. At the southern end of the mosquitoes' range, near the Gulf of Mexico, conditions remain favorable for breeding well into fall. A typical *Wyeomyia smithii* from Florida or Alabama will, consequently, not go dormant until day length has shrunk to about twelve hours, which at that latitude corresponds to early November. At the far northern edge of the range, meanwhile, winter arrives much earlier, and an average mosquito from Manitoba will go into dormancy in late July, as soon as day length drops below sixteen and a half hours. Interpreting light cues is a genetically controlled and highly heritable trait: *Wyeomyia smithii* are programmed to respond to day length the same way their parents did, even if they find themselves living under very different conditions. (One of the walk-in-freezer-like rooms in the Bradshaw-Holzapfel lab contains locker-size storage units, each equipped with a timer and a fluorescent bulb, where mosquito larvae can be raised under any imaginable schedule of light and dark.) In the mid-nineteen-seventies, Bradshaw and Holzapfel demonstrated that *Wyeomyia smithii* living at different elevations also obey different light cues—high-altitude mosquitoes behave as if they were born farther north—a discovery that today might seem relatively unremarkable but at the time was sufficiently noteworthy to make the cover of *Nature*.

About five years ago, Bradshaw and Holzapfel began to wonder about how *Wyeomyia smithii* might be affected by global warming. They knew that the species had expanded northward after the end of the last glaciation, and that, at some point in the intervening millennia, the critical photoperiods of northern and southern populations had diverged. If the climatic conditions for *Wyeomyia smithii* were changing once again, then perhaps this would show up in the timing of diapause. The first thing the couple did was go back to look at their old records, to see if the data contained any information that they hadn't noticed before.

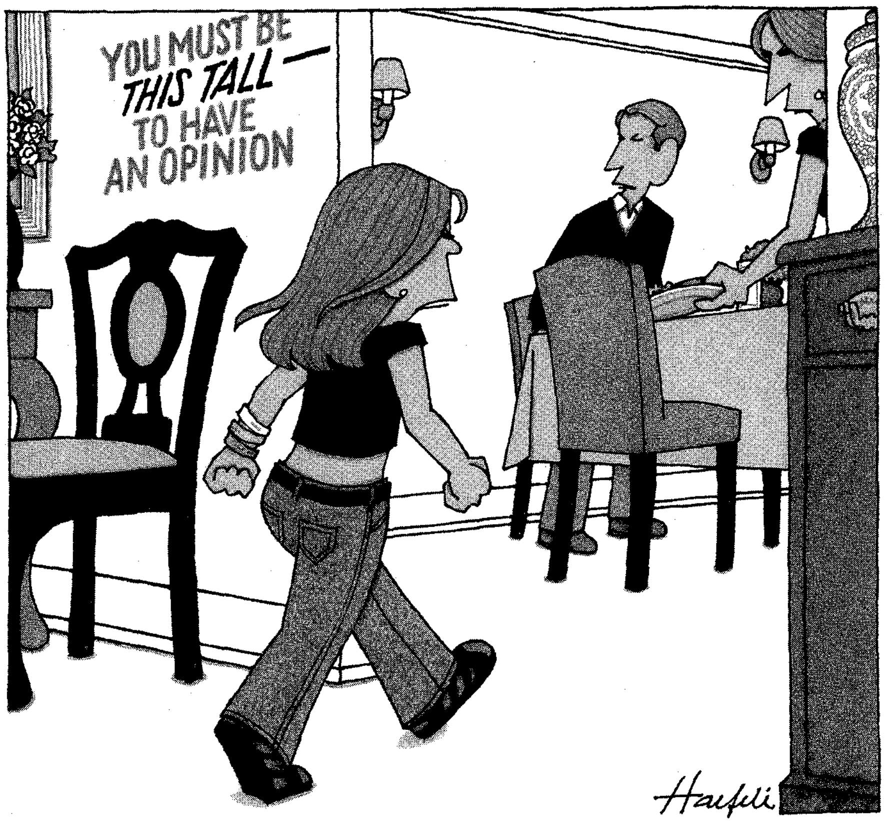
"There it was," Holzapfel told me. "Just hitting you right in the eye."

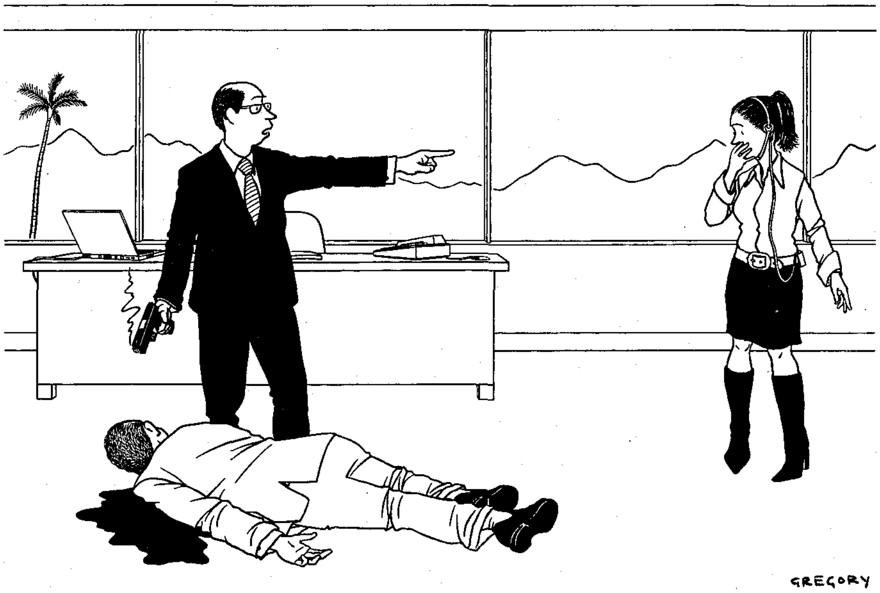
When an animal changes its routine by, say, laying its eggs earlier or going into hibernation later, there are a number of possible explanations. One is that the change reflects an innate flexibility; as conditions vary, the animal is able to adjust its behavior in response. Biologists call such flexibility "phenotypic plasticity," and it is key to the survival of most species. Another possibility is that the shift represents something deeper and more permanent—an actual rearrangement of the organism's genetic structure.

In the years since Bradshaw and Holzapfel established their lab, they have collected mosquito larvae from all over the eastern United States and much of Canada. They used to do the collecting themselves, driving across the country in a van equipped with a makeshift bed for their daughter and a miniature lab for sorting, labelling, and storing the thousands of specimens they would gather. Nowadays, they more often send out their graduate students, who, instead of driving, are likely to fly. (Getting through airport security with a backpack full of mosquito larvae is a process that, the students have learned, can take half a day.)

Every subpopulation exhibits a range of light responses; Bradshaw and Holzapfel define critical photoperiod as the point at which fifty per cent of the mosquitoes in a sample have switched from active development to diapause. Each time they collect a new batch of insects, they put the larvae in petri dishes and place the dishes in the controlled-environment light boxes, which they call Mosquito Hiltons. Then they test the larvae for their critical photoperiod, and record the results.

When Bradshaw and Holzapfel went back to their files, they looked for populations that they had tested repeatedly. One of these was from a wetland called Horse Cove, in Macon County, North Carolina. In 1972, when they had collected mosquitoes from Horse Cove for the first time, their files showed, the larvae's critical photoperiod was fourteen hours and twenty-one minutes. They collected a second batch of mosquitoes from the same spot in 1996. By that point, the insects' critical photoperiod had dropped to thirteen hours and fifty-three minutes. All told, Bradshaw and Holzapfel found comparative data in their files on ten different subpopulations—two in Florida, three in North Carolina, two in New Jersey, and one each in Alabama, Maine, and Ontario. In every case, the critical photoperiod had declined over time. Their data also showed that the farther north you went the stronger the effect; a regression analysis revealed that the critical photo-


YOU MUST BE THIS TALL—TO HAVE AN OPINION
Haefeli



"Call my attorney and say that I killed Ted in self-defense. Call my publicist and say that I wish Ted the best of luck in all his future endeavors."

• •

period of mosquitoes living at fifty degrees north latitude had declined by more than thirty-five minutes, corresponding to a delay in diapause of nine days.

In a different mosquito, this shift could be an instance of the kind of plasticity that allows organisms to cope with varying conditions. But in *Wyeomyia smithii* there is almost no flexibility when it comes to timing the onset of diapause. Warm or cold, all the insect can do is read light. Bradshaw and Holzapfel knew, therefore, that the change they were seeing must be genetic. As the climate had warmed, those mosquitoes which had remained active until later in the fall had enjoyed a selective advantage, presumably because they had been able to store a few more days' worth of resources for the winter, and they had passed this advantage on to their offspring, and so on. In December, 2001, Bradshaw and Holzapfel published their findings in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.* By doing so, they became the first researchers to demonstrate that global warming had begun to drive evolution.

The Monteverde cloud forest sits astride the Cordillera de Tilarán, or Tilarán Mountains, in northwestern Costa Rica. The rugged terrain, in combination with the trade winds that blow off the Caribbean, makes the region unusually diverse; in an area of less than two hundred and fifty square miles, there are seven different "life zones," each with its own distinctive type of vegetation. The cloud forest is surrounded on all sides by land, yet, ecologically speaking, it is an island and, like many islands, displays a high degree of endemism, or biological specificity. Fully ten per cent of Monteverdean flora, for example, are believed to be unique to the Cordillera de Tilarán.

The most famous of Monteverde's endemic species is a small toad. Known colloquially as the golden toad, it was officially discovered by a biologist from the University of Southern California named Jay Savage. Savage had heard of the toad from a local resident who lived in a Quaker community at the edge of the forest; still, when he came across it for the first time, on May 14, 1964, at the top of a high mountain ridge, his reaction, he would later recall, was one of "disbelief." Most toads are dull brown, grayish green, or olive; this one was a flaming shade of tangerine. Savage named the new species *Bufo periglenes,* from a Greek word meaning "bright," and titled his paper on the discovery "An Extraordinary New Toad (Bufo) from Costa Rica."

Since the golden toad spent its life underground, emerging only in order to reproduce, most of what was subsequently learned about it had to do with sex. The toad turned out to be an "explosive breeder." Instead of staking out and defending territory, males simply rushed the first available female and fought for the chance to mount her. ("Amplexus" is the term of art for an amphibian embrace.) Generally, males outnumbered females, in some years by as much as ten to one, a situation that often led bachelors to attack amplectant pairs and form what Savage once described as "writhing masses of toad balls." The eggs of the golden toad, black-and-tan spheres, were deposited in small pools—puddles, really—often no more than an inch deep. Tadpoles emerged in a matter of days, but required another month for metamorphosis. During this period, they were highly dependent on the weather: too much rain and they would be washed down the steep hillsides, too little and their puddles would dry up. Golden toads were never found more than a few miles from the site where Savage originally spotted them, always at the top of a mountain ridge, and always at an altitude of between forty-nine hundred and fifty-six hundred feet.

In the spring of 1987, an American biologist who had come to the cloud forest specifically to study the amphibians there counted fifteen hundred golden toads in temporary breeding pools. That spring was unusually warm and dry, and most of the pools evaporated before the tadpoles in them had had time to mature. The following year, only one male was seen at what previously had been the major breeding site. Seven males and two females were seen at a second site a few miles away. The year after that, a search of all spots where the toad had earlier been sighted yielded a solitary male. No golden toad has been seen since, and it is widely assumed that after living its colorful, if secretive, existence for hundreds of thousands of years *Bufo periglenes* is now extinct.

In April, 1999, J. Alan Pounds, who heads the Golden Toad Laboratory for Conservation, in the Monteverde Preserve, published a paper in *Nature* on the golden toad's demise. In it, he linked the toad's extinction, as well as the decline of several other amphibian species, to a shift in rainfall patterns. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of days with no measurable precipitation in Monteverde, a change that, in turn, is consonant with an increase in the elevation of the cloud cover. In a separate article in the same issue of *Nature*, a group of scientists from the United States and Japan reported on their efforts to model the future of cloud forests. They predicted that as global CO_2 levels continued to rise, the height of the cloud cover in Monteverde and other tropical cloud forests would continue to climb. This, they speculated, would force additional high-altitude species “out of existence.”

Climate change—even violent climate change—is itself, of course, part of the natural order. In the past two million years, great ice sheets have advanced over the Northern Hemisphere and retreated again at least twenty times. In addition, there have also been dozens of abrupt climate shifts, like the Younger Dryas, which occurred some twelve thousand eight hundred years ago. (The event is named after a small Arctic plant—*Dryas octopetala*—that suddenly reappeared in Scandinavia.) At that point, the earth, which had been warming rapidly, cooled back down into ice-age conditions. It remained frigid for twelve centuries and then warmed, even more abruptly; in Greenland, ice-core records show, average annual temperatures climbed by nearly twenty degrees in a single decade.

Thompson Webb III is a paleoecologist who teaches at Brown University. He studies pollen grains and fern spores, in an effort to reconstruct the plant life of previous eras. In the mid-seventies, Webb began to assemble a database of pollen records from lakes all across North America. (When a grain of pollen falls on the ground, it usually oxidizes and disappears; if it is blown onto a body of water, however, it can sink to the bottom and be preserved in the sediment for millennia.) The project took nearly twenty years to complete, and, when it was finally done, it showed how, as the climate of the continent had changed, life had rearranged itself.

A few months ago, I went to visit Webb in Providence. He has an office in the university’s geochemistry building, and also a lab, where, on this particular day, one of his research assistants was examining charcoal particles from an ancient forest fire. Webb took some slides from a cabinet and slipped one under the lens of a microscope. Most pollen grains are between twenty and seventy microns in diameter; to be identified, they must be magnified four hundred times. Peering through the eyepiece, I saw a tiny sphere, pocked like a golf ball. Webb told me that what I was looking at was a grain of birch pollen. He replaced the slide, and a second tiny golf ball swam into focus. It was beech pollen, Webb explained, and could be distinguished by a set of three minute grooves. “You see, they’re really very different,” he said of the two grains.

After a while, we went down the hall to Webb’s office. On his computer he called up a program named Pollen Viewer 3.2, and a map of North America circa 19000 B.C. appeared on the screen. Around that time, the ice sheets of the last glaciation reached their maximum extent; the map showed the Laurentide ice sheet covering all of Canada as well as most of New England and the upper Midwest. Because so much water was tied up in the ice, sea levels were some three hundred feet lower than they are now. On the map, Florida appeared as a stubby protuberance, nearly twice as wide as it is today. Webb clicked on “Play.” Time began to move forward in thousand-year increments. The ice sheet shrank. A huge lake, known as Lake Agassiz, formed in central Canada, and, a few thousand years later, drained. The Great Lakes emerged, and then widened. Around eight thousand years ago, open water finally appeared in Hudson Bay. The bay began to contract as the land around it rebounded from the weight of the ice sheet.

Webb clicked on a pull-down menu that listed the Latin names of dozens of trees and shrubs. He chose *Pinus* (pine) and again hit “Play.” Dark-green splotches began to move around the continent. Twenty-one thousand years ago, the program showed, pine forests covered the entire Eastern Seaboard south of the ice sheet. Ten thousand years later, pines were concentrated around the Great Lakes, and today pine predominates in the southeastern United States and in western Canada. Webb clicked on *Quercus* (oak), and a similar process began, only *Quercus* moved in a very different pattern from *Pinus*. More clicks for *Fagus* (beech), *Betula* (birch), and *Picea* (spruce). As the earth warmed and the continent emerged from the ice age, each of the tree species migrated, but no two moved in exactly the same way.

“The trick you’ve got to remember is that climate is multivariate,” Webb explained. “The plant species are having to respond both to temperature changes and to moisture changes and to changes in seasonality. It makes a big difference if you have a drier winter versus a drier summer, because some species are more attuned to spring and others to fall. Any current community has a certain mixture, and, if you start changing the climate, you’re changing the temperature, but you’re also changing moisture or the timing of the moisture or the amount of snow and, bingo, species are not going to move together. They can’t.”

Webb pointed out that the warming predicted for the next century is on the same scale as the temperature difference between the last glaciation and today. “You know that’s going to give us a very different landscape,” he said. I asked what he thought this landscape would look like. He said he didn’t know—his central finding, from more than thirty years of research, is that, as the climate changes, species often move in surprising ways. In the short term, which is to say in the remainder of his own life, Webb said that he expected mostly to see disruption.

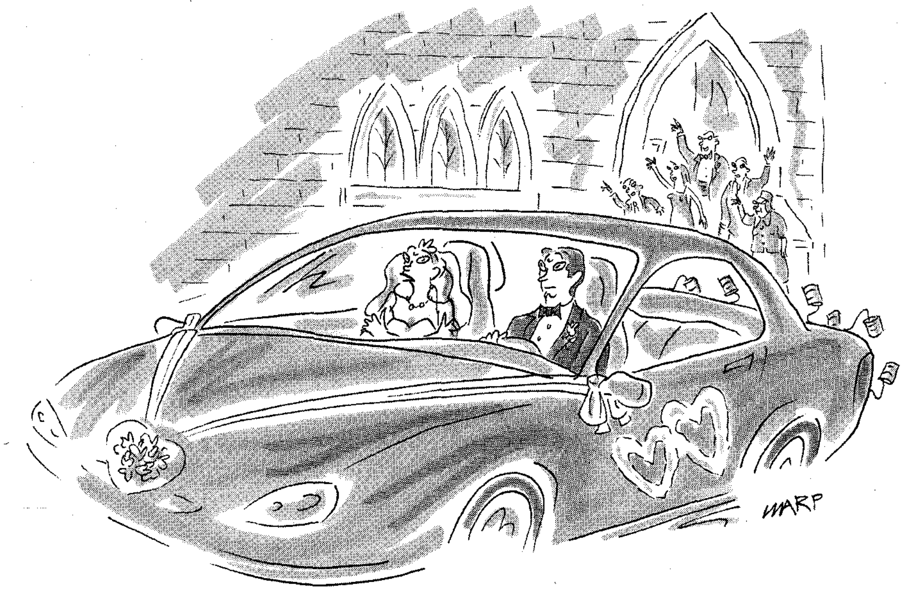
“We have this strange sense of the evolutionary hierarchy, that the microorganisms, because they came first, are the most primitive,” he told me. “And yet you could argue that this will just give a lot of advantage to the microorganisms of the world, because of their ability to evolve more quickly. To the extent the climate is putting organisms as well as ecosystems under stress, it's opening the opportunities for invasive species on the one hand and disease on the other. I guess I start thinking: Think death."

Any species that is around today, including our own, has already survived catastrophic climate change. The fact that a species has survived such a change, or even many such changes, is no guarantee, however, that it will survive the next one. Consider, for example, the outsized megafauna—seven-hundred-and-fifty-pound sabre-toothed cats, elephantine sloths, and fifteen-foot-tall mastodons—that once dominated the North American landscape. These megafauna lived through several glacial cycles, but then something changed, and they nearly all died out at the same time, at the beginning of the Holocene.

Over the past two million years, even as the temperature of the earth has swung wildly, it has always remained within certain limits: the planet has often been colder than today, but rarely warmer, and then only slightly. If the earth continues to warm at the current rate, then by the end of this century temperatures will push beyond the "envelope" of natural climate variability.

Meanwhile, thanks to us, the world today is a very different—and in many ways diminished—place. International trade has introduced exotic pests and competitors; ozone depletion has increased exposure to ultraviolet radiation; and many species have already been very nearly wiped out, or wiped out altogether, by overhunting and overharvesting. Perhaps most significantly, human activity, in the form of farms and cities and subdivisions and mines and logging operations and parking lots, has steadily reduced the amount of available habitat. G. Russell Coope is a visiting professor in the geography department at the University of London and one of the world's leading authorities on ancient beetles. He has shown that, under the pressure of climate change, insects have migrated tremendous distances; for example, *Tachinus caelatus*, a small, dullish-brown beetle common in England during the cold periods of the Pleistocene, today can be found only some five thousand miles away, in the mountains west of Ulan Bator, in Mongolia. But Coope questions whether such long-distance migrations are practical in a fragmented landscape like today's. Many organisms now live in the functional equivalent of "oceanic islands or remote mountain tops," he has written. "Certainly, our knowledge of their past response may be of little value in predicting any future reactions to climate change, since we have imposed totally new restrictions on their mobility; we have inconveniently moved the goal posts and set up a ball game with totally new rules."

A few years ago, nineteen biologists from around the world set out to give, in their words, a "first pass" estimate of the extinction risk posed by global warming. They assembled data on eleven hundred species of plants and animals from sample regions covering roughly a fifth of the earth's surface. Then they established the species' current ranges, based on climate variables such as temperature and rainfall. Finally, they calculated how much of the species' "climate envelope" would be left under different warming scenarios. The results of this effort were published in *Nature* in 2004. Using a mid-range projection of temperature rise, the biologists concluded that, if the species in the sample regions could be assumed to be highly mobile, then fully fifteen per cent of them would be "committed to extinction" by the middle of this century, and, if they proved to be basically stationary, an extraordinary thirty-seven per cent of them would be.



"You're really starting to bug me."

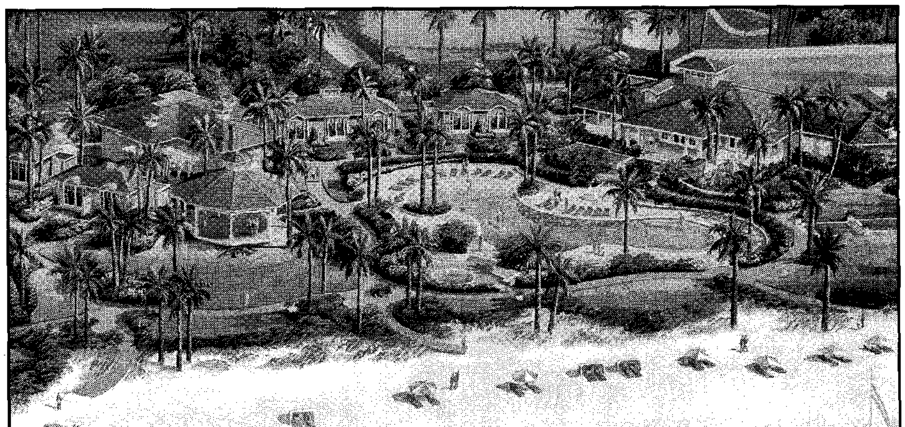
The mountain ringlet (*Erebia epiphron*) is a dun-colored butterfly with orange-and-black spots that curl along the edges of its rounded wings. It overwinters as a larva, and as an adult has an extremely brief life span—perhaps as short as one or two days. A montane, or mountain, species, it is found only at elevations above a thousand feet in the Scottish Highlands and, farther south, in Britain's Lake District, only above fifteen hundred feet.

Together with a colleague from the University of York, Chris Thomas has for the past few years been monitoring the mountain ringlet, along with three other species of butterfly—the Scotch Argus (*Erebia aethiops*), the large heath (*Coenonympha tullia*), and the northern brown Argus (*Aricia artaxerxes*)—whose ranges are similarly confined to northern England and Scotland. In the summer of 2004, researchers for the project visited more than four hundred sites where these "specialist" species had been sighted in the past, and last summer they repeated the process. Documenting a species' contraction is more difficult than documenting its expansion—is it really gone, or did someone just miss it?—but preliminary evidence suggests that the butterflies are already disappearing from lower-elevation and more southerly sites. When I went to visit Thomas, he was getting ready to take his family to Scotland on vacation and was planning to recheck some of the sites. "It's a bit of a busman's holiday," he confessed.

As we were wandering around his yard in search of commas, I asked Thomas, who was the lead author on the extinction study, how he felt about the changes he was seeing. He told me that he found the opportunities for study presented by climate change to be exciting.

"Ecology for a very long time has been trying to explain why species have the distribution that they do, why a species can survive here and not over there, why some species have small distributions and others have broad ones," he said. "And the problem that we have always had is that distributions have been rather static. We couldn't actually see the process of range boundaries changing taking place, or see what was driving those changes. Once everything starts moving, we can begin to understand: is it a climatic determinant or is it mainly other things, like interactions with other species? And, of course, if you think of the history of the last million years, we now have the opportunity to try and understand how things might have responded in the past. It's extremely interesting—the prospect of everything changing its distribution, and new mixtures of species from around the world starting to form and produce new biological communities. Extremely interesting from a purely academic point of view.

"On the other hand, given our conclusions about possible extinctions, it is, to me personally, a serious concern," he went on. "If we are in the situation where a quarter of the terrestrial species might be at risk of extinction from climate change—people often use the phrase of being like canaries—if we've changed our biological system to such an extent, then we do have to get worried about whether the services that are provided by natural ecosystems are going to continue. Ultimately, all of the crops we grow are biological species; all the diseases we have are biological species; all the disease vectors are biological species. If there is this overwhelming evidence that species are changing their distributions, we're going to have to expect exactly the same for crops and pests and diseases. Part of it simply is we've got one planet, and we are heading it in a direction in which, quite fundamentally, we don't know what the consequences are going to be." ♦



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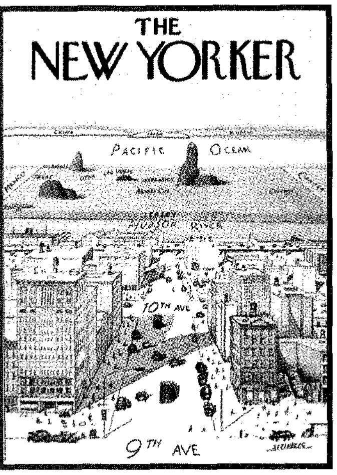

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BY JACK HANDEY

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This is not playtime or make-believe. This is real. It's as real as a beggar squatting by the side of the road, begging, and then you realize, Uh-oh, he's not begging.

This is as real as a baby deer calling out for his mother. But his mother won't be coming home anytime soon, because she is drunk in a bar somewhere.

It's as real as a mummy who still thinks he's inside a pyramid, but he's actually in a museum in Ohio.

This is not something where you can dress your kid up like a hobo and send him out trick-or-treating, because, first of all, your kid's twenty-three, and, secondly, he really is a hobo.

All of this probably sounds old-fashioned and "square" to you. But if loving your wife, your country, your cats, your girlfriend, your girlfriend's sister, and your girlfriend's sister's cat is "square," then so be it.

You go skipping and prancing through life, skipping through a field of dandelions. But what you don't see is that on each dandelion is a bee, and on each bee is an ant, and the ant is biting the bee and the bee is biting the flower, and if that shocks you then I'm sorry.

You have never had to struggle to put food on the table, let alone put food on a plate and try to balance it on a spoon until it gets to your mouth.

You will never know what it's like to work on a farm until your hands are raw, just so people can have fresh marijuana. Or what it's like to go to a factory and put in eight long hours and then go home and realize that you went to the wrong factory.

I don't hate you; I pity you. You will never appreciate the magnificent beauty of a double rainbow, or the plainness of a regular rainbow.

You will never grasp the quiet joy of holding your own baby, or the quiet comedy of handing him back to his "father."

I used to be like you. I would put my napkin in my lap, instead of folding it into a little tent over my plate, like I do now, with a door for the fork to go in.

I would go to parties and laugh—and laugh and laugh—every time somebody said something, in case it was supposed to be funny. I would walk in someplace and slap down a five-dollar bill and say, "Give me all you got," and not even know what they had there. And whenever I found two of anything I would hold them up to my head like antlers, and then pretend that one "antler" fell off.

I went waltzing along, not caring where I stepped or if the other person even wanted to waltz.

Food seemed to taste better back then. Potatoes were more potatoey, and turnips less turnippy.

But then something happened, something that would make me understand that this is no game. I was walking past a building and I saw a man standing high up on a ledge. "Jump! Jump!" I started yelling. What happened next would haunt me for the rest of my days: the man came down from the building and beat the living daylights out of me. Ever since then, I've realized that this is no game.

Maybe one day it will be a game again. Maybe you'll be able to run up and kick a pumpkin without people asking why you did that and if you're going to pay for it.

Perhaps one day the Indian will put down his tomahawk and the white man will put down his gun, and the white man will pick up his gun again because, Ha-ha, sucker.

One day we'll just sit by the fire, chew some tobacky, toast some marshmackies, and maybe strum a tune on the ole guitacky.

And maybe one day we'll tip our hats to the mockingbird, not out of fear but out of friendliness.

If there's one single idea I'd like you to take away from this, it is: This is no game. The other thing I'd like you to think about is, could I borrow five hundred dollars?

(Author's Note: Since finishing this article, I have been informed that this is, in fact, a game. I would like to apologize for everything I said above. But please think about the five hundred dollars.) ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

From the Lewisboro (N.Y.) Ledger.

A Flintlock Ridge Road man said he saw a bear in his backyard. Police could not find a bear when the officer arrived. Police said it was possible the man saw two turtles.

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"The network helps REI convey a sense of adventure to our customers."
-Brad Brown,
Vice President of Information Services,
Recreational Equipment, Inc.

Retail Trailblazing

An adventurous spirit extends to technology innovation.

On a typical weekend afternoon at the Seattle flagship store of Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI), a customer is climbing the wall. Not just any wall, but the 65-foot Pinnacle—one of the tallest indoor climbing structures in the world. Elsewhere, customers are putting shoes through the paces on the store's footwear test trail. Or test-riding bicycles on the store's outdoor bike path.

Adventure hangs in the air at REI's 82 retail locations. Indeed, an adventurous spirit is at the core of REI, a consumer cooperative founded in 1938 by 23 Pacific Northwest mountaineers.

The bold spirit extends to technology, too. REI was one of the first national retailers to roll out wireless networks to all its stores some four years ago. In-store kiosks link customers to REI.com, where they can get detailed product information, create and print product-comparison charts, and order any item from the retailer's massive inventory. Wireless barcode scanners allow customers to automatically create their own gift registries while roaming the aisles.

REI depends on an end-to-end Intelligent Retail Network solution from Cisco Systems for its wireless networks, e-commerce, retail automation and more. "The network helps REI convey a sense of adventure to our customers," notes Brad Brown, Vice President of Information Services. In turn, that adventurous spirit helps REI maintain its fiercely loyal customer base—which is essential to the member-owned cooperative.

And that's just the beginning. Currently, REI is exploring the use of wireless devices to shorten check-out lines; interacting with customers in-store via cell phone; and reducing costs with a widespread deployment of IP Communications. Supported by a secure, reliable network infrastructure from Cisco, REI will continue to blaze new trails in retailing.

Learn how Cisco is helping to transform retailing at **cisco.com/go/ny-retail.**

Cisco Systems

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DEPARTMENT OF APPEARANCES

THE POWER OF HAIR

Searching for the next generation of baldness cures.

BY BURKHARD BILGER

Ali Amin sat in a small mahogany-panelled room in Beverly Hills, his chin in his hand. He was contemplating the seven degrees of hair loss. On a low table in front of him, a chart showed a sequence of line drawings of a man's head, turned in profile or facing forward and bowed, as if in prayer. Each pair of drawings illustrated a typical stage in the slow but implacable progress of androgenetic alopecia, or male-pattern baldness. At the top of the chart, the subject had a mane so full that it crowded his brow. By stage three, his hair was in retreat, leaving a widow's peak in front and a balding spot in back. By stage five, the two receding hairlines had met in the middle, along a narrow isthmus on top. By stage seven, even this was gone. The last survivors hung forlornly above the ears and neck, as if clinging to the face of a cliff.

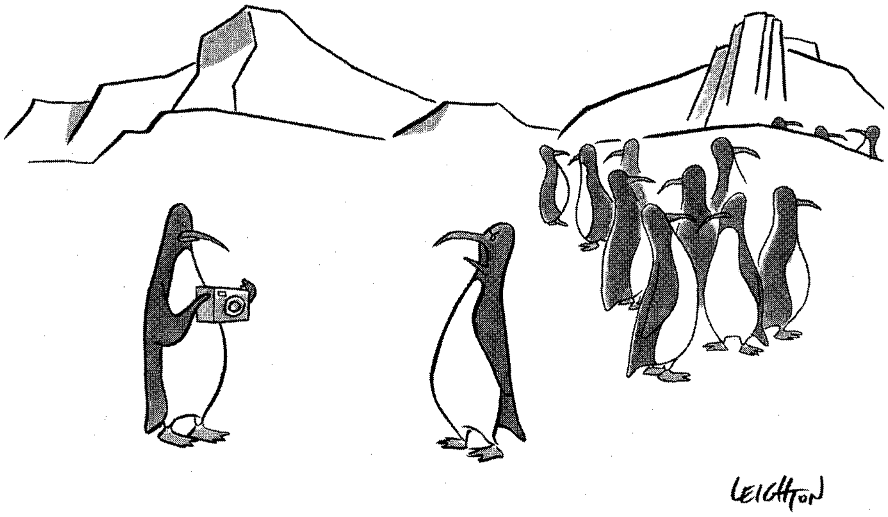
"There's no wrong answer," Carl Carlberg, a senior counsellor at the Bosley hair-restoration company, told Amin. "All we want right now is your self-identification." He'd once been in the same situation, he added, pulling a glossy photograph of himself from a folder and placing it on the table. Bosley offered free hair transplants to its employees after a year of service, and Carlberg had received two since taking the job. He pointed to his pale, narrow face in the old photograph, with its deeply receding hairline—somewhere between a stage five and a stage six. Then he glanced up at Amin and invited him to stare: Carlberg's white-blond hair now reached to his forehead. And though it was still thin, it looked perfectly natural—it was impossible to say where the original hair ended and the transplanted hair began. "Most people say I look younger now than I did then, and that picture was taken sixteen years ago," Carlberg said. "That is the power of hair."

It was hard to argue with him, though it wasn't clear why. Male-pattern baldness may be the only sign of virility that most men would rather do without. Like an adolescent's first beard, it's a condition triggered by the release of testosterone, only in this case the hormone reacts with an enzyme in the bloodstream, creating dihydrotestosterone, which shuts certain follicles off rather than turning them on. The best way to keep all your hair, Hippocrates noted more than two thousand years ago, is to be castrated. (Eunuchs are famously resistant to baldness.) In 1942, the Yale anatomist James B. Hamilton took this observation a step further. He studied a pair of identical twins; one of them was bald, and the other had been castrated in a mental institution and had a full head of hair. Hamilton gave the hairy twin shots of testosterone and watched to see what would happen. (He later repeated the experiment with more than a hundred other castrated inmates, with similar results.) Within a few months, the patient was as bald as his brother, and his locks never grew back.

Transplants typically take three to five hours, with patients awake the whole time.

PHILIPPE PETIT-ROULET

Amin slouched back in his chair and clawed at his forelock. He was twenty-seven years old, tall and hulking, with hawkish features and dark-brown hair that was just beginning to recede at the temples and crown. (His name has been changed at his request.) He sold apparel and accessories in New York City, at a wholesale business in Manhattan's garment district—within walking distance of a number of hair specialists. Yet he'd come here, to the headquarters of the largest transplant firm in the world, to be worked on by the master. The next morning, L. Lee Bosley, the self-anointed Renoir of transplantation, would slice strips from the back and side of Amin's scalp, have nurses divvy up the follicles, and graft them to the bare areas on Amin's head. "I'm losing a lot," Amin said. "My wife says she doesn't care, but she cares."



"Why on earth would you spring for color film?"

• •

He leaned forward to show us the beginnings of his bald spot. It was barely visible to the casual observer, and Amin was young to be considering a transplant, but the problem had begun to obsess him. "It's falling, falling, a little, a little. It's scary. All my family, they're bald. And in business it's everything, the look."

Carlberg nodded. "We're an image-driven society," he said.

They were quiet for a while, then Amin pointed to a drawing halfway down the chart—a stage three—as if to say, "That's me."

At last count, roughly forty million Americans were going bald—about half of all men and more than a third of all women. Some wear wigs and weaves, some use hair-growth stimulants, like minoxidil and finasteride (better known as Rogaine and Propecia), and some use folk remedies like flaxseed and saw-palmetto berry. (The ancient Egyptians preferred rubbing their heads with a mixture of lion, hippopotamus, crocodile, cat, snake, and ibex fat.) Hair transplants have been available since 1952, when the dermatologist Norman Orentreich performed the first one, in New York, and last year alone more than eighty thousand Americans had the procedure done. Still, to the rest of the population all the fuss can seem slightly ridiculous. As one transplant surgeon I spoke to put it, "The man who isn't bald never thinks about baldness. The man who is losing his hair never thinks about anything else."

One floor below Amin and Carlberg, some seventy employees were fielding phone calls and e-mails, coding each inquiry to the ad or infomercial that had prompted it. When Lee Bosley founded his business, in the nineteen-seventies, he had one nurse, a secretary, and a handful of patients who sometimes came for their procedures in disguise. Now the Bosley company has ninety-two offices, which together receive about ten thousand inquiries a month. Lee Bosley alone has performed more than thirty-eight thousand procedures. His patients have included two Academy Award-winning actors, a couple of generals, several Saudi Arabian princes, and one princess.

Bosley, who turned seventy-four this year, is a stout, square-headed man with unblinking blue eyes and preternaturally perfect gray hair—the product of seven transplants. He has a stiff-legged, stumping gait from a recent hip replacement, and speaks in the gruff yet anodyne manner of a television doctor from the nineteen-seventies. Four years ago, he sold his company to Aderans, a Japanese wig manufacturer, for forty-five million dollars. But he kept his corner office, his transplant schedule, and his high fees—about fifteen thousand dollars for the average procedure, double the company's regular rate.

When Bosley stopped in to see Amin that day, they chatted briefly about Amin's native Beirut—"the Zurich of the Middle East," Bosley called it. Then he pulled out a comb and ran it slowly through Amin's hair. "I'm looking for a critically important ratio," he said. "Supply versus demand. How many square centimetres of hair do you have, how many hairs per square centimetre, and how many do you need where you're losing it?"

A typical scalp has about two hundred hairs per square centimetre, but only half that many are needed to convey the illusion of coverage. Emanuel Marritt, a transplant surgeon in Colorado, proved this several years ago by marking off three squares on a subject's scalp and gradually plucking hairs from the middle square; when he asked his assistants to examine the squares, they couldn't tell the difference between them. Transplanting a few follicles is often enough to disguise a bald spot, but younger men have to shepherd their hair carefully; otherwise, they could end up with patches of transplanted hair surrounded by bare skin. "I would like it better if you were thirty-seven and your pattern was better established," Bosley said to Amin. "But your ratio is fine. You have plenty of hair to do what you want to do. The results will be beautiful."

The hair industry has a history of failing to deliver on such promises, of course. And balding men have a habit of embracing cosmetic fixes that make them look worse than before. (The staff kitchenette at Bosley is decorated with magnets depicting notorious comb-overs, including "The Ear Surfer," "The Low Rider," and "The Dairy Swirl.") Transplant patients were once among the worst victims of this strange co-dependency, and Bosley did his share of the unseemly in the early years. Of late, though, as transplants have improved Bosley has found himself in the odd stance of a conservative—an old-fashioned craftsman in an era of gene therapists and hair cloners. While he's still working at moving follicles a few at a time, others are proposing to banish baldness altogether.

Eight years ago, in a surgery room in Newcastle, England, a biologist named Colin Jahoda had a tiny patch of hair and skin removed from the back of his scalp. The tissue was dissected to remove all but the dermal-sheath cells around the base of the follicles, then the cells were carefully implanted on his wife's forearm. Jahoda was a professor at the University of Durham and one of the world's leading experts on the developmental biology of hair. His wife, Amanda Reynolds, was a biologist in the same field. The experiment was her idea.

Biologists had known for decades that some cells in hair follicles have a strange, polymorphic potency. Like stem cells, they can transform themselves and the tissue around them—becoming skin, bone, or cartilage, and inducing other cells to do the same. In 1992, Jahoda stripped some cells from the base of a mouse's whisker follicle, multiplied them in culture, and transplanted them to the animal's ear. The mouse promptly grew a whisker where none would naturally have grown. The experiment with Reynolds went much further. Not only were she and Jahoda transplanting cells in humans rather than in mice; they were transplanting them from one person to another, and from a man to a woman. "Looking back, you think, Yeah, that was maybe a strange thing to do," Jahoda told me. "But, at the time, it was just interesting. Extremely interesting."

Three weeks after the implantation, Reynolds noticed a lone dark hair sprouting from the pale skin of her forearm. Her own hair is blond, whereas Jahoda's was black at the time (it's almost completely gray now), so the source of the new hair seemed obvious. To confirm it, Reynolds and Jahoda sent the follicle to Angela Christiano, a hair geneticist at Columbia University, for DNA analysis. Christiano found that the new follicle's papilla cells—those at the very root of the hair—had both X and Y chromosomes, so they must have come from Jahoda. Those in the rest of the follicle had only X chromosomes, so they came from Reynolds. The implanted sheath cells, in other words, had performed a double feat of metamorphosis: first, they'd turned themselves into papilla cells, then they'd coaxed Reynolds's epidermis into forming a follicle. "Isn't nature wonderfully clever?" Reynolds recalls thinking.

For decades, researchers had been trying to cure baldness by reviving dormant follicles, either with drugs like finasteride, which blocks the production of dihydrotestosterone, or through some sort of gene therapy. Christiano, for instance, has spent her career trying to find the genetic switches that govern hair growth. She and her colleagues at Columbia travel the world studying the DNA of people in whom the process has gone haywire, such as a family of "wolf" people in Mexico, or an Italian village that has an unusual number of hairless children. "One of the great things about male-pattern baldness is that the follicles are still intact," she says. "They are still able to make peach fuzz; they're just miniaturized. The hardware is there; it's largely a software problem."

A genetic cure for baldness is decades away, Christiano says. There are multiple genes involved, and complex hormonal cues—in women, for example, estrogen weakens the balding effects of testosterone until the onset of menopause—and only a handful of academics are working on the problem. Yet the Reynolds-Jahoda study, published in *Nature* in November, 1999, suggested a different approach. Why not grow new follicles from scratch? Reynolds and Jahoda showed that a few transplanted cells are enough to make a follicle. They showed that follicular cells have the rare gift of being "immuno-privileged"—they can be transferred between people without being rejected. And they showed that hair grown from transplanted cells may retain its original shape and color. Suddenly, it wasn't hard to envision the hair-transplant shop of the future. Customers would come in and have a follicle or two removed from the back of their heads. Technicians would multiply the cells in culture—cloning them, in effect—then inject them into any bald spots, as if they were seeding a lawn. Those who wanted a little variety could buy other donors' cells off the shelf, choosing from auburn, blond, or brunet; curly, kinky, or straight.

ROSA
NEXT SHOW

Jahoda and Reynolds later divorced (she had already had his hair surgically removed from her arm) and went on to other studies. Curing baldness "is not what I want to spend my time doing," Jahoda told me—the fact that he still has a full head of hair had nothing to do with the decision, he added. In recent years, however, at least two firms have explored the promise of his earlier work. The first, a British company called Intercytex, has labs in Manchester, England, and Woburn, Massachusetts. The second, Bosley's new corporate owner, Aderans, has opened a hair-cloning lab in Philadelphia and a lab in Atlanta that's working on methods for implanting the cells. Both Aderans and Intercytex hope to get their procedures approved by the F.D.A. and on the market within five years. The real question, they say, is who will get there first.

"How old are you, forty-one?" Lee Bosley asked me one day, on the terrace of his Spanish-style villa in the West Hollywood hills. "Well, I don't think it'll happen in your lifetime." Although Bosley is no longer the official spokesman for his company, he maintains a vocal skepticism from the sidelines. Even if bioengineers can grow hair, he says, he doubts that they'll get it to grow in the right shape, thickness, or direction anytime soon. Or that they'll improve on transplants. "Have you looked closely at his hair?" Bosley said, pointing at Ken Washenik, the company's medical director, who had joined us for lunch. "Well, go ahead and look. How much better does it have to be?"

Washenik, who is forty-six, was a dermatologist at New York University when Aderans hired him to direct Bosley, in 2002. Like nearly everyone I met in the industry, he has had multiple transplants, one of them performed by Bosley himself. His sandy ruff is a masterpiece of naturalism, as convincingly unkempt as the wheat fields in a painting by Millet. "The hard part isn't the supply," Bosley said, admiring his handiwork with a grin. "The hard part is making it look good."

When Bosley performed his first transplant, in 1963, cosmetic surgery was still something of a rogue profession. Insurance companies wouldn't cover it (and still don't); medical boards hadn't been established for it; and most of the procedures were experimental. It was a little like the Wild West, surgeons now say, which suited Bosley fine. Growing up in Nebraska, the son of a high-school coach in Lincoln, Bosley had paid for his own clothes from the age of eleven, and put himself through medical school in Omaha by selling pots and pans door to door. "Nobody has given me a damn penny since I got out of high school," he told me. In San Francisco, where he began his career as a dermatologist, Bosley styled himself as a playboy, flying twin-engine planes, driving an Aston Martin convertible, and shooting an elephant on safari (its six-foot tusks hang on the wall of his office). He soon saw that there was an enormous market for transplants, but that clients rich and vain enough to try them tended to cluster in New York and Hollywood. So in 1974 Bosley took a map of Beverly Hills and drew a circle around it with a six-mile radius. Then he went looking for an office and a house.

It had been twenty-two years since Norman Orentreich performed the first transplant, but the technique hadn't evolved much. Surgeons still took plugs of hair from the back of a patient's head. They punched holes of the same diameter in bald areas, discarded the skin, then inserted the hair plugs into the holes, as if replacing divots on a golf course. More often than not, they drove the punches in at the wrong angle, so the follicles were cut off at the root and the hair wouldn't grow. "If it grew at all, it was in different directions—clumpy, bedraggled, three hairs out of a plug," Bosley says of his first attempts, in the early nineteen-sixties. "If there was any hair growing at all, it was a success—it was 'Look! It's growing!' And it looked like crap."

At first, Bosley attracted mostly the adventurous and the desperate. Then, as techniques improved, he pulled in the rest with glossy before-and-after advertisements and infomercials. Between 1974 and 1978, Bosley's business quadrupled. He and other surgeons gradually got the knack of punching out follicles—they used to brag about the number of hairs that were growing per plug, Bosley says—but most of them had no sense of placement. They made the hairline dip too low, so that fifty-year-olds looked as if they'd never been through puberty. They planted the plugs like spokes radiating out from the head, and arranged them in perfect grids for maximum coverage. As the natural hair continued to recede, the plugs were left exposed, like the sprouts on a Chia Pet. If the hair fell out in back, where the plugs had been removed, the bare skin was so badly scarred that it looked as if it had been sprayed by buckshot.

And still the customers came: balding businessmen clutching newspaper ads; society women who'd worn wigs for years; celebrities in dark glasses and shawls who asked Bosley's secretary to clear the lobby ahead of them. "I used to call it a follicular folie à deux," Emanuel Marritt, the transplant surgeon in Colorado, told me. "You have a population of patients who are emotionally extremely vulnerable, willing to pay anything. And you have a doctor with a mountain of advertising debt who needs to break even. It's a conspiracy of two: a patient who doesn't want to hear what he really needs, being operated on by a doctor who doesn't want to tell him."

Thirty years later, Bosley is both the world's most successful transplant company and among the most maligned. In 1996, critics point out, the company paid nearly six hundred and fifty thousand dollars to settle a civil suit brought by the district attorney of Los Angeles County and the state attorney general. The suit alleged that, among other things, the company misrepresented before-and-after shots and the painfulness of transplants. (The Bosley company denied the charges and admitted to no wrongdoing in settling the suit.)

The quality of Lee Bosley's surgical work wasn't questioned in the suit, and even his company's detractors say that its transplants have improved. Since the mid-nineties, hair plugs have shrunk from four millimetres in diameter to two millimetres to the size of a single follicular unit—a group of between one and four hairs that share the same blood vessels and sebaceous glands. Placing the grafts has nearly become the art form that Bosley claims it is. Still, the profession is haunted by its early years: the more undetectable transplants become, the more the old, botched plug jobs stand out.

"I have regrets, in retrospect," Bosley told me that night at his house. We were still sitting on the terrace, and the sun had set behind the surrounding mountains, throwing the streets of Beverly Hills into shadow. Far below, you could see the lights of La Cienega Boulevard flickering on. "I got to the point where I felt pretty guilty doing it," Bosley said. "I was dimly thinking that we weren't doing people that much of a favor. But many of the patients would come back and say, 'This is wonderful! I love it!' Even with the picket-fence look, the cornrows, the doll's head." It looked terrible, he said. It looked unnatural. "But it was hair where they didn't have it before."

On the morning of Ali Amin's transplant, he arrived early at Bosley headquarters, wearing black jeans and a black Hugo Boss T-shirt. A friend, whom I'll call Ziad Farah, and who also works in New York's garment district, was with him. (They were getting transplants at the same time, then heading to a shoe show in Las Vegas.) Amin was led to a surgery room and instructed to sit in what looked like a barber's chair. A nurse in surgical scrubs used electric clippers to shave parts of his head. Another injected his scalp with lidocaine and Marcaine, to numb it, and gave him a mild dose of Versed, a sedative. When Lee Bosley arrived, he briefly went over the procedure. Then he took a scalpel and drew it across the back of Amin's head. The skin, which was stretched taut around the skull, pulled apart as Bosley cut, revealing a layer of fat and a lacy network of blood vessels. Bosley carved a six-inch strip from the back and a three-inch strip along the side, both about half an inch wide, and dropped them into a petri dish filled with a saline solution. Then the nurses quickly swaddled Amin's head in bandages.

When they were done, he looked a little like an extra from "Lawrence of Arabia," with a white paper headdress that hung to his shoulders. (His scalp couldn't be stitched up until the procedure had been completed, in case more follicles were needed, so the bandages had to be thick enough to absorb the blood from the open wound.) Bosley had used a brown grease pencil to draw a curving line across Amin's forehead, to show how far down the new hairs would go. The hairline was symmetrical, he explained, and its distance from the eyebrows was roughly equal to that from the eyebrows to the tip of the nose, and from the tip of the nose to the tip of the chin. "It's balanced from left to right and top to bottom," he said. "That's what a natural hairline looks like."

As Bosley spoke, a team of three nurses was busy dissecting the strips of scalp at a long white counter. The first nurse, hunched over a microscope, was cutting the strips into slices. The other two were peering through loupes and dividing the slices into follicular units. (The hairs from the side of the scalp were finer and would form the new hairline; the coarser ones, from the back, would fill in the rest of the head.) Under the microscope, the skin looked pale and gelatinous, pierced with thick black shafts, like a slab of raw sea bass with strands of licorice stuck in it. Each follicular unit was a miniature organ, with its own muscles, blood vessels, nerves, and glands gathered in an opaque sheath around the hair. The trick was to cut away the skin and the fat and leave these vitals intact, so that the follicles would quickly take root. Bosley would transplant around fourteen hundred in all, for a fee of a little more than sixteen thousand dollars—about eleven dollars and fifty cents apiece.

Amin was insensible, by now, to the intense activity around him. The sedative and the anesthesia had kicked in, and he was absorbed by the sight of Al Pacino, speaking in a thick Cuban accent, on a television screen a few feet away. Transplant procedures usually last between three and five hours, with patients awake the whole time, so Bosley keeps an extensive library of videotapes. As it happened, Amin and Farah had both asked their nurses to show "Scarface"—an odd choice, I thought, for two men having their scalps sliced open and punctured with grafts—but the company had only one copy. In the end, Farah had graciously ceded it to his friend and settled for "Dances with Wolves."

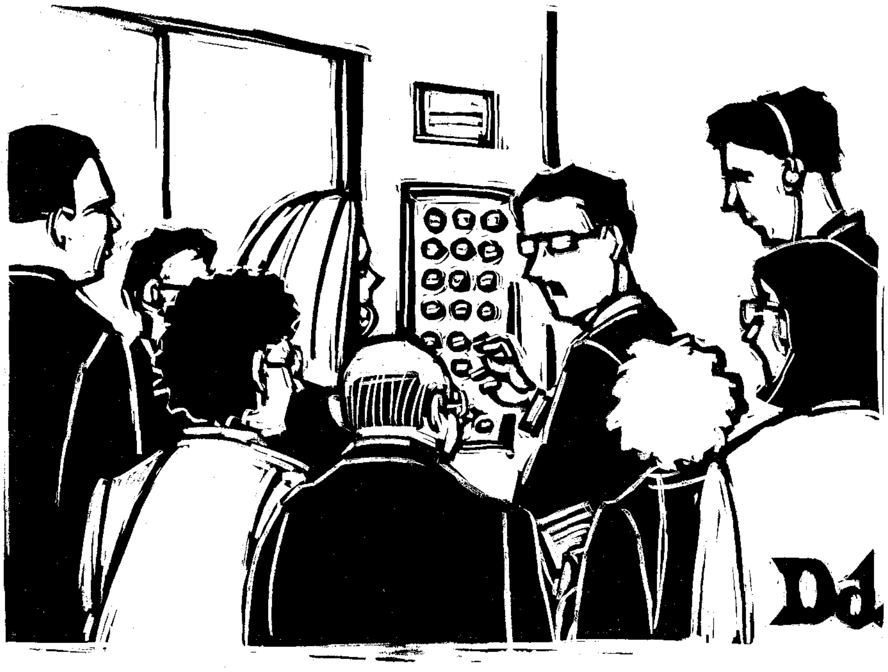
While Amin watched Pacino, Bosley spoke to him occasionally in a low-frequency murmur that seemed to have a hypnotic effect. "Springtime in the desert," I heard him say at one point. "The flowers were blooming. Beautiful." As he spoke, he took a small spearpoint of surgical steel and repeatedly poked Amin's forehead with it, making millimetre-wide slits for the grafts. He began by placing the cuts in an irregular pattern along the grease mark he'd traced. These were for the fine "rogue hairs" that range below a natural hairline, he explained. Then he took a slightly larger spearpoint and made slits for coarser hairs and for multi-hair follicular units. Hairs along the brow tend to jut forward, so he kept the spearpoint nearly horizontal; those on top stand up straight, so he inserted it more vertically. But the exact angle and direction varied with each slit, to re-create the ordered chaos of a natural head of hair. The difference between a good transplant and a bad one, Bosley said, is the difference between a forest and an orchard. "If you see a straight row of trees, you know that God didn't put them there."

An hour and a half later, after Bosley had made some fourteen hundred incisions—two nurses kept strict count as he worked—he straightened up and slapped Amin on the shoulder. "If you want to call it the hard part, that was the hard part," he said. For the next four hours, his two assistants would take the follicles that the other nurses had cut apart and stuff each one into an incision, using a pair of tweezers. Then the wounds in Amin's scalp would be stitched up, the seedlings would be covered with gauze and an elastic hairnet, and Amin would go back to his hotel with a supply of painkillers and a medicated shampoo—to wait, like the most impatient of gardeners, and see what would grow.

"What we're doing is minor surgery and major artistry," Bosley told me. "It comes closer to painting a portrait in oil than to doing an appendectomy." Yet even the best transplant surgeons are less like Renoir and more like the cave painters of Lascaux, mimicking nature with a few deft strokes and a severely limited palette. A full head of hair has about a hundred thousand follicles; Amin had lost about twenty thousand, and Bosley had fourteen hundred with which to disguise the loss. Most patients, of course, had even more to cover up. "The Catch-22 remains the same," Emanuel Marritt told me. "The more you need it, the less you can have it. The more you want it to do for you, the less it's going to do for you."

A few weeks after I first spoke to Lee Bosley, I took a train to Philadelphia to visit the Aderans Research Institute, the hair-cloning laboratory that had been set up three years ago by Bosley's new Japanese owners. After a brief tour of the institute's labs, where three technicians in white smocks were preparing cell cultures, I was taken to a brick structure on a nearby college campus, where the experimental subjects were kept. Inside, the corridors were long and dingy and smelled of feed pellets and disinfectant. I was helped into a surgical gown, issued a mask, bootees, a hairnet, and rubber gloves, then ushered into a narrow room lit by a long fluorescent tube. To the left, a specially ventilated cabinet had been set up for examining subjects. To the right, about sixty small cages were arranged along the wall. The cages were labelled "Male Facial," "Female Facial," "Male Scalp," and so on, and contained some of the strangest animals I'd ever seen.

Biologists call them "nude mice." They'd been selectively bred with a genetic mutation that disabled their immune system. This allowed research-



"Sorry. I think I just pressed 'shuffle.'"

ers to graft foreign tissue onto them without having it rejected, but it left the mice vulnerable to infection—hence my mask and gloves—and completely hairless. If you looked closely in the dim light, you could see their red eyes and pale, shrivelled skin. Each mouse had a flap of darker, more nubbly flesh grafted down the length of its back, like an ingrown Band-Aid. Some of the grafts were human foreskins, I was told, from baby boys who had recently been circumcised. The rest were discarded pieces of skin from patients who'd had face-lifts. All the grafts had been implanted with follicle cells, and some—even the foreskins—had a tuft or two sprouting from them.

"If you put in mouse cells, you get mouse hair growing out of human skin. If you put in human cells, you get human hair," Kurt Stenn, Aderans's chief scientific officer, told me. "We got very excited about that." Still, the scraggly stuff I saw hardly looked ready for a Bosley brochure. In previous studies, the hair was never meant to break through the skin and had coiled underneath in dark little cysts. In these mice, it looked like Bosley's descriptions of the first attempts at transplantation plugs: disorderly clumps, sprawled in every direction. The company's first product won't be perfect, Ken Washenik later admitted—"It won't be the iPod. It'll be a big old eight-track player"—but it should be useful as "ground cover." Instead of seeding the whole scalp with cultured cells, surgeons will first establish an attractive hairline with transplanted follicles, then fill in the gaps with the clones. "There is a dermatological disease called uncombable hair syndrome," Washenik said. "We don't want to re-create that."

To get cloned hair to grow at the right angle and direction, the Aderans team in Atlanta is working on embedding the cultured cells into tiny bits of soluble polymer. These will then be injected into the skin, to shape the follicle as it develops. Intercytex has decided to forgo this step. Its researchers are betting that the skin itself will gradually force the new follicles into line. "There is a kind of intelligence to these cells," Jerry Cooley, a transplant surgeon who is working with Intercytex on clinical trials, told me. "It's amazing to see someone who has had many transplants. Their new hairs start to take on the same wave and direction as the old ones. Over time, they relearn how to behave."

For now, the Intercytex approach is yielding quicker results. The company began human trials in December, 2003, injecting cultured cells into the scalps of seven volunteers in Manchester, England. "There has been visible hair growth," Cooley told me, but he couldn't comment on "the cosmetic usefulness." In coming months, another ninety subjects will take part in Phase 2 trials, at cloning centers in the United States and England. Aderans, meanwhile, is still working with mice. The company may yet leap ahead, though, if its polymer technology proves necessary to control the growth of cloned follicles. "So that's the race," Washenik told me. "And it's a good race, because everyone is going to benefit. I think right now is the best time in history to be losing your hair."

An America without baldness isn't that hard to imagine. We are a vain, self-inventing, early-adopting folk, and we've embraced many stranger medical procedures. We straighten our teeth, though braces are a horror. We have collagen injected into our lips and fat sucked out of our thighs. Even breast implants have become so common that they've helped enlarge the average bra by a full size in fifteen years. Hair cloning, should it overcome the technical challenges, would be quick and painless by comparison—an afternoon's visit or two. "It's amazing how quickly people forget you were ever bald," Robert Bernstein, a transplant surgeon in Manhattan and a past winner of his field's Platinum Follicle Award, told me. "Once there is an unlimited amount of hair, the market will be unlimited."

I hadn't given much thought to my own hairline before reporting this story. Like my father and my older brother, I'd steadily lost ground cover, as they say, but I'd always liked my father's haphazard mane. His bald spot was encircled by clouds of gray fuzz, like the steam around Old Faithful, and I didn't mind when my hair seemed headed in the same direction. As Lee Bosley put it, not long after we met, "You're a well-developed stage three verging on a four. But, then, writers don't give a damn." Still, after weeks spent among men obsessed with transplants, who glanced avidly at my hairline as soon as we met and eventually blurted out, "You'd be a perfect candidate!," the idea began to seem less outlandish. I couldn't help wondering how it would look.

SHOES
LUNCH

It's the nature of cosmetic surgery that it resets our standards as it becomes more widespread. Straight teeth and large breasts begin as anomalies and slowly become the norm. We start by trying to imitate nature, then graduate to improving upon it—or so we hope. "Hair loss is the most common affliction in mankind," the host of a call-in talk show about baldness told me when I was in Los Angeles. (He himself took finasteride, sprinkled keratin fibres on his bald spot, and used "a lot of creative styling.") If hair loss is so common, I asked him, doesn't that make it a natural condition? "So is tooth decay," he said. "So is cancer."

When I last saw Amin and Farah, in October, eight months after their transplants, the trees were losing their leaves but the men's hair had finally come in. Bosley had warned them that it would take a while. Within days of a procedure, the transplanted hairs fall out and their follicles become dormant. Then, after about three months, they sprout again. "You don't feel it," Amin said. "It just starts coming in little by little. Now my wife looks at me and says, 'Thank God you did it.' " The bald spot at the back of his head—"the lemon," as he called it—was now covered with a thin crop of natural-looking hair, and his widow's peak was almost gone. As for Farah, his face had puffed up alarmingly after the surgery, and for months he could feel a tightness around the scar at the back of his scalp, but the transplanted areas had filled in nicely and he planned to go back for another procedure in the spring. "Let me tell you something," he'd said to me. "Having hair on your head, you feel like you're still young. You feel like you're alive. Nobody wants to look old, man. Nobody wants to look old." ♦

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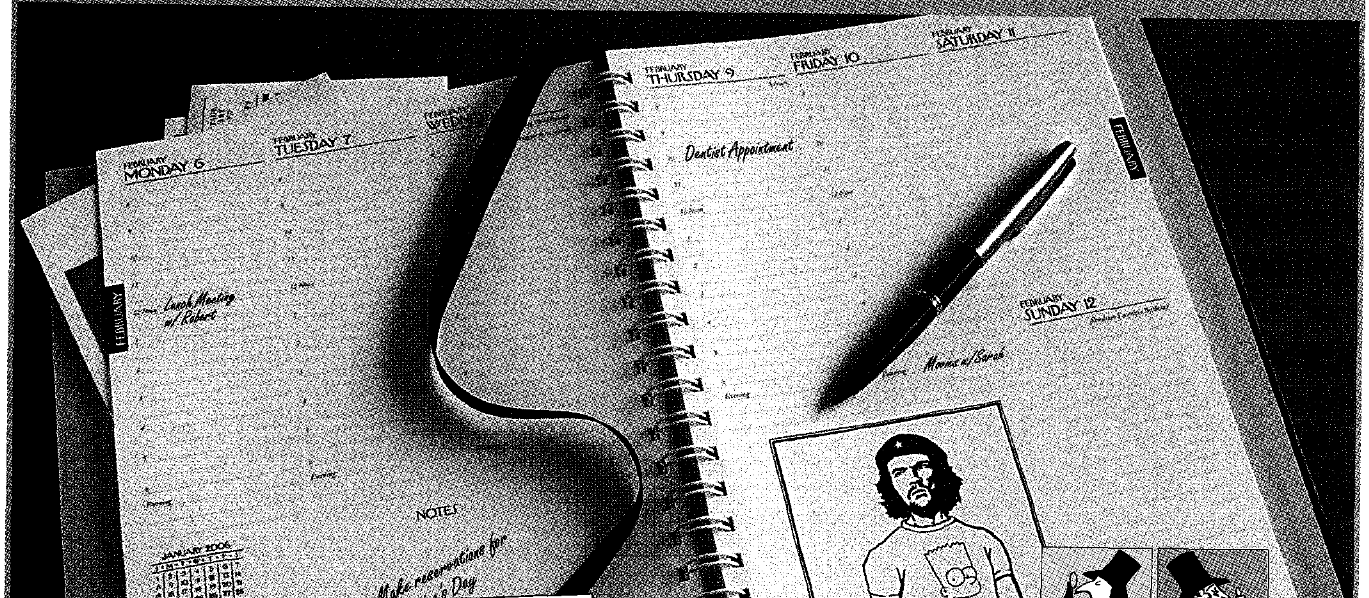

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FEBRUARY TUESDAY 7
FEBRUARY THURSDAY 9
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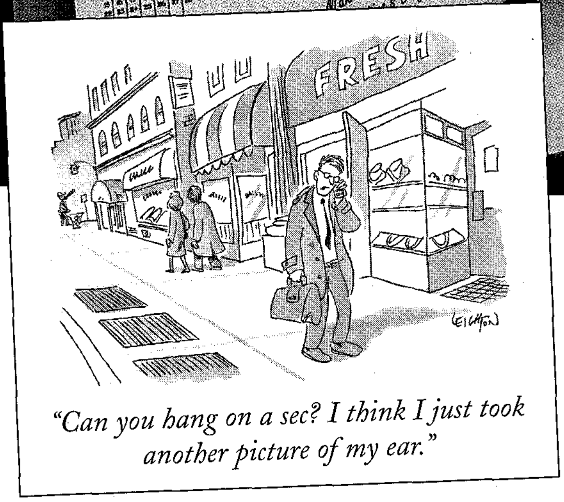

"Can you hang on a sec? I think I just took another picture of my ear."

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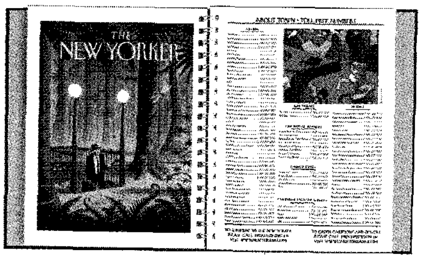

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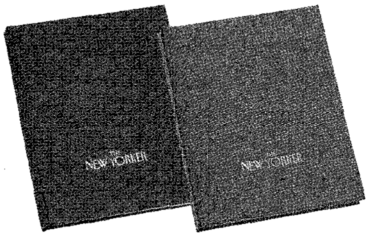

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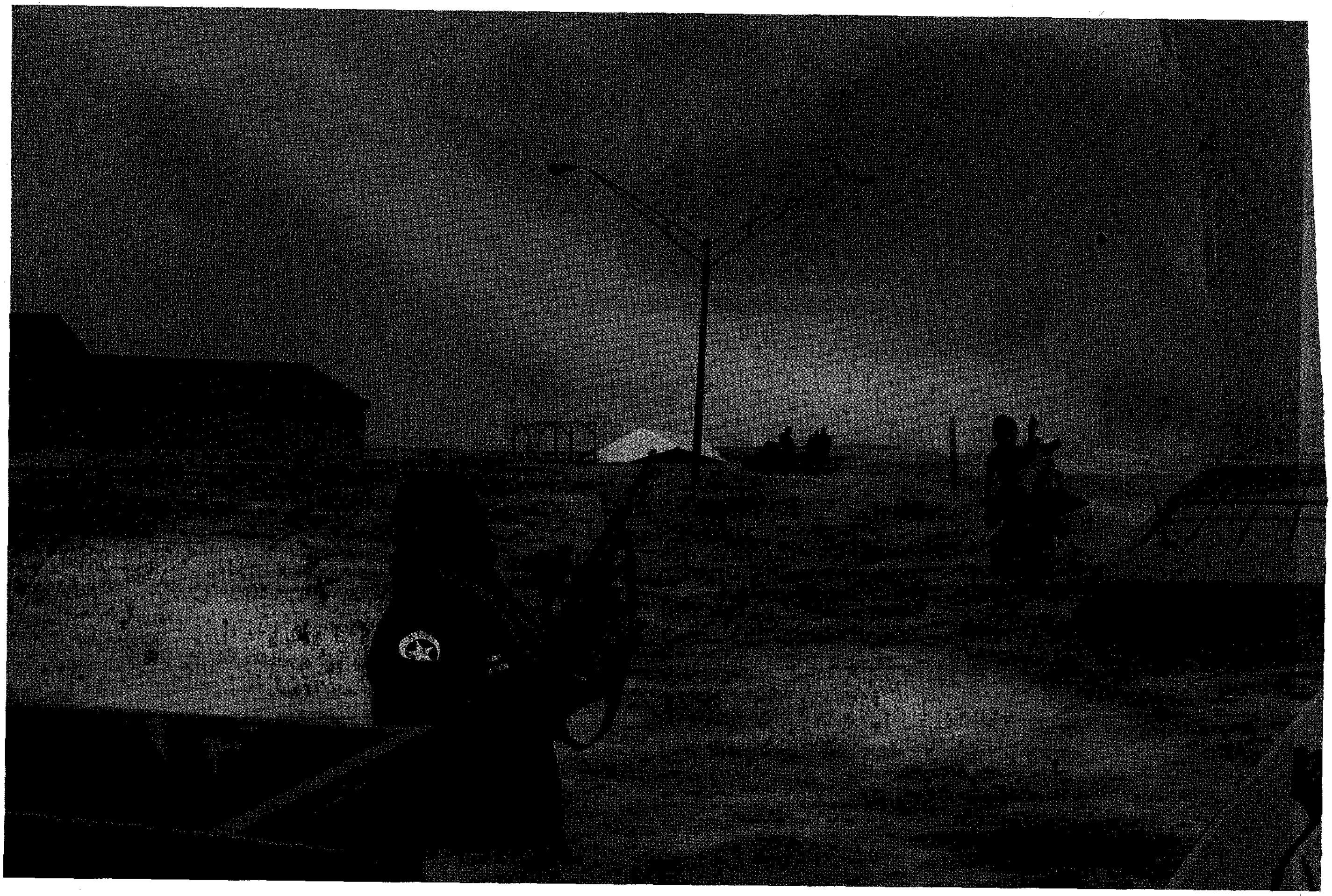


JOHN RITTER

A REPORTER AT LARGE

DELUGED

When Katrina hit, where were the police?

BY DAN BAUM

Tim Bruneau discovered New Orleans in 1997, when, as a twenty-three-year-old soldier at Fort Polk, Louisiana, he was close enough to the city to hit Bourbon Street on weekends. He'd spent two years in Panama as a military policeman, and New Orleans reminded him, in a good way, of Central America—hot, sensual, and easygoing. Rather than go home to Texas after leaving the Army, he joined the New Orleans Police Department.

Bruneau is tall and thin, with a big Adam's apple in a long neck. He walks like a marionette, lurching along with his knees slightly bent and his feet dragging. In 2002, he was hit by a car as he was running after a drug suspect. When he awoke, six weeks later, he couldn't move his left side. Bruneau assumed that his career was finished, but the department stood by him, paying for several operations, including the amputation of the little finger of his left hand, and keeping a job open for him. When it became clear that he would never be strong enough to return to patrol, he was made a detective.

The Hurricane Katrina crisis began for Bruneau on Monday, August 29th, shortly after the storm had passed through. A young woman lay dead in the middle of the 1900 block of Jackson Avenue. Her skull was crushed, and a fallen street light, blown down by the ninety-five-mile-an-hour winds, lay beside her. Along Jackson Avenue, people were emerging from shotgun shacks into a world of smashed oak trees and downed power lines. Some of them knew the woman. She had gone out during the storm to buy drugs.

Bruneau's police radio carried reports from the Lower Ninth Ward, three miles away: it was flooding rapidly, from a breach in the so-called Industrial Canal. But that was another district's problem. Bruneau radioed for the coroner. Nobody showed up. Bruneau called again. Nothing. An hour passed. The dispatcher told Bruneau that floodwater was heading toward him. The Seventeenth Street and London Avenue Canals had breached their levees, and Lake Pontchartrain was pouring into northern New Orleans. Bruneau asked for an ambulance. None was available, because most of them had been moved out of the city before the storm. He asked the dispatcher to try the coroner again,

but the coroner's office was flooded.

Bruneau waited by the body for two hours, and finally left it with a patrolman and drove off to another call. When he checked back, in the early afternoon, the woman still lay uncovered on the hot pavement. Standard operating procedure, it seemed, no longer applied. In some nearby storm wreckage, he and the patrolman found a deflated water-bed mattress. Neighbors watched as the two men rolled the woman onto it and hoisted her into the back seat of Bruneau's unmarked white Crown Victoria. He explained to the neighbors that he planned to deliver the woman to the morgue. "So they wouldn't think I was up to no good," he told me. After informing the dispatcher that he had a 29-U, a victim of an unclassified death, in his back seat, he drove to Charity Hospital, about a mile away. Water was approaching the building's steps, and the doctors and staff members were evacuating. They couldn't take the body. At Tulane University Hospital, down the street, an emergency-room doctor refused to let Bruneau in the door.

By this time, Bruneau knew from police reports that his own house and car were underwater. He parked a few blocks from the Superdome, staring through the windshield at the huge structure rising incongruously from deep water. "I was dazed and confused," he told me later. All he had was his uniform, the cash in his wallet, and his gun. He didn't know what to do with the corpse. The entire edifice of city government seemed to have dissolved in the floodwaters. He sat gazing at the Superdome for two hours. Finally, the dispatcher got back to him.

"Undo what you did," she said.

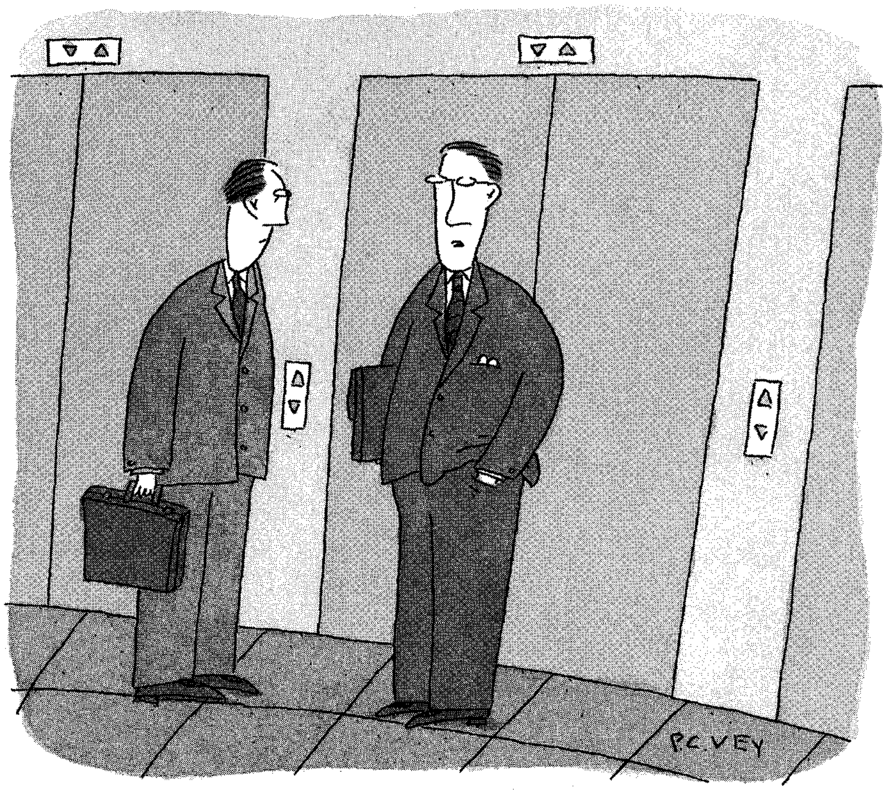
"You mean dump the body?"

"Undo what you did."

Bruneau drove back to Jackson Avenue. A sergeant met him there with a body bag, and the neighbors watched again as the cops pulled the woman out of the car and onto a strip of grass. They unrolled her from the water bed and zipped her into the bag. This time, Bruneau didn't know what to say to the neighbors, so he simply drove away. During the days that followed, he headed back toward Jackson Avenue every now and then. The 1900 block eventually lay four blocks into the flood zone, and he stood at the water's edge and peered through his binoculars. The woman floated this way and that, and came to rest about half a block from where he'd first found her.

All over New Orleans, officers like Tim Bruneau were trying to do their best. One swam from his flooded house with his Rottweiler. A heavyset female officer who could not swim huddled on her daughter's desk all night, floated out on a door, and reported for duty. Kristi Foret, a tiny twenty-five-year-old single mother who joined the department in August after serving with the Army in Afghanistan, spent two days trapped on her roof in the sun. After a neighbor with a boat rescued her, she stayed with him for another three days, sleeping in the boat and pulling people off roofs and out of attics. "It's called an

As an institution, the N.O.P.D. disintegrated almost immediately, but around the city individual officers acted heroically.



"I have the kids Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. She has them Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Thursday they're free-range."

• •

oath," she told me. "Whenever you give your word, you do exactly what you say you're going to do."

As an institution, though, the New Orleans Police Department disintegrated with the first drop of floodwater. The current chief, Warren J. Riley, likes to say that no department anywhere has ever faced "an enemy like Katrina." The flood deprived the department of ammunition, communications, and cars. But the loss of equipment doesn't fully explain a collapse that shocked even the department's oldest veterans.

The N.O.P.D. was notorious long before Katrina for failures of leadership, professionalism, and discipline. The department was one of the most poorly paid in the country—even the highest-ranking patrolmen earned less than eight hundred dollars a week before taxes. Officers had to buy their own uniforms, gun belts, raincoats, and handcuffs—everything except a badge, a gun, a radio, and a nightstick. They were required to live within the city limits, and many sent their children to New Orleans' notoriously underfunded public schools. Nearly all patrolmen worked private security details to make ends meet. For instance, Sabrina Richardson, the single mother of an eight-year-old boy, worked eight-hour shifts for the department and then a midnight-to-six shift in a Wal-Mart parking lot. On weekends, she patrolled the stands of the Superdome. "My son didn't like it," she said. "I'd tell him, 'You gotta suck it up. Put on your tough skin, and *man up!*'"

New Orleans disrespected its police, and often the police seemed to disrespect themselves. Even the department's official history reads like a multicount indictment of graft, ineptitude, and brutality, as far back as the Louisiana Purchase. The first police force in French New Orleans was organized in 1803, but after "numerous complaints" the entire unit had to be dismissed, and that set the tone for two centuries of bribe-taking, drug-dealing, beatings, torture, and murder of civilians and fellow-officers alike. In 1994, the United States Attorney in New Orleans suggested that as many as fifteen per cent of the department's fifteen hundred officers were corrupt, an estimate that—judging by the arrests and firings that followed—was probably short of the mark. Many officers came to the force from the public schools with limited writing skills. Their inability to produce clear reports was one of the reasons that about half of the serious cases the N.O.P.D. cleared between 2002 and 2004—some twenty-two thousand—were rejected by prosecutors. (The traditional reluctance of many New Orleanians to testify on behalf of prosecutors may have been another.) The mistrust and contempt between the city and its police became as established a feature of New Orleans as the humidity. The largely black underclass suffered most for it, and filed scores of brutality complaints over the years, but for some citizens, particularly among the white middle class, the department served as a topic of ironic amusement. The force wasn't just rotten; it was flagrantly, exuberantly, entertainingly rotten—a city signature, like the food and the music. "It isn't something you're ever going to change, so you may as well have another drink and enjoy the spectacle," a local rug dealer named Bob Rue told me. "You're not in America here. You're not even in Louisiana. This is New Orleans."

Everything is viewed through a racial lens in New Orleans, but it refracts differently there than elsewhere in the South. Louisiana was colonized first by the French, whose Code Noir encouraged intermarriage between whites and their black slaves to create a buffer class that might prevent insurrection; and briefly by the Spanish, whose custom of *coartación* let slaves buy their freedom. By the time the United States took over, in 1803, the two customs had helped to create a large educated middle class of black freemen and black French Creoles that divided itself socially according to skin color. The Americans who poured into Louisiana made no such distinctions and generally treated all of them as inferiors, which rankled especially in New Orleans, where the most privileged blacks and Creoles lived.

Before the hurricane, New Orleans was more than two-thirds black. For many years, though, the police department was largely white. When Marc Morial—the son of New Orleans' first black mayor, Ernest (Dutch) Morial—became mayor, in the mid-nineties, the influx of black officers accelerated. By this year, slightly more than half the officers were black. Some white New Orleanians malign Morial's administration as the acme of corruption. Blacks, though, tend to remember him as a Robin Hood. In addition to helping increase the number of blacks in the department, he delivered the first serious effort to clean it up.

In 1994, Morial broke with tradition and went outside the department to recruit, as chief of police, Richard Pennington, an African-American who was then the No. 2 of the Washington, D.C., force. Pennington hadn't applied for the job, and accepted only when Morial promised not to interfere. Pennington, by his own account, was something of a prig. "I never went to a police party. I didn't want to be the officers' friend," he told me this fall in Atlanta, where he is now chief. Pennington forbade officers from working details at bars and strip joints, banned the practice of patrolmen lavishing expensive presents on their commanders at Christmas, and stopped hiring officers with criminal records or bad credit. During his eight years as chief, he fired, arrested, or forced out more than three hundred cops.

Crime and brutality complaints fell significantly. Pennington wrested a big pay raise for his cops from the city council, but felt it necessary to carry a gun—as much to protect himself from cops, he said, as from ordinary crooks. In 2002, Pennington ran for mayor against Ray Nagin, the general manager of Cox Communications' cable-TV monopoly in New Orleans. Pennington lost, and resigned. Nagin reverted to tradition and hired a chief from within the department, a friend since primary school: Edwin P. Compass III.

In personality and management style, Compass was Pennington's opposite. He was known as "a cop's cop." He was as likely to greet an officer with open arms and a cry of "Give me some love!" as with a handshake or a salute. Compass had been highly regarded as a street cop and was among the few African-Americans ever asked to command one of the department's eight districts. In a department riven with racial divisions, he went out of his way to be color-blind. "Once, when some mid-level officers were saying I was racist, Eddie Compass stood up at a meeting and backed me up," said Felix Loicano, who is white and was at the time in command of the Public Integrity Division, which investigated crooked cops. "He was just a lieutenant then—this took guts." But Compass himself seemed to question his qualifications as chief. An old friend of his said that Compass never seemed comfortable in the role and harbored self-doubts. As chief, Compass was criticized for limiting the scope of an investigation into whether district commanders were downgrading crimes to make their statistics look good. The murder rate in New Orleans rose. By the time Katrina struck, it was ten times the national average. Whatever respect the department had earned during the Pennington years was gone; by the middle of 2005, the *Times-Picayune* and the weekly *Gambit,* in news stories and editorials, were upbraiding the department regularly. And then, in a gesture that typified relations between the city's poor and its police, the cops picked a needless fight with one of New Orleans' most beloved institutions, the Mardi Gras Indians.

Captain Anthony Cannatella, the commander of the Sixth District, is, for better or worse, a New Orleans Police Department legend. Supporters and detractors use the same adjective to describe him: old-school. In the positive sense, it means incorruptible, hard-charging, and devoted to the city and its police department. N.O.P.D. officers can retire after thirty years with a pension equal to a hundred per cent of their pay. Cannatella, who has been on the force almost forty years, has essentially worked the last ten for free. In his first year as commander, the Sixth District, a triangular slice of uptown New Orleans, suffered about half as many murders—twenty-seven—as it had the year before. In the negative sense, "old-school" connotes roughness, racial insensitivity, and the convoluted family relationships that make the police force resistant to reform. Cannatella likes to say that he is related to twenty-five current and former cops. He is built like a street-corner mailbox, with a fringe of hair around a neckless, bald head, and he walks with a busy, short-legged gait. He usually doesn't carry a gun, preferring to talk his way out of trouble. New Orleans experienced the same wave of nineteenth-century immigrants that swelled the East Coast—from Ireland, Germany, and Italy—and Cannatella's accent ("Get to woik!") suggests Jersey City rather than the Old South. It's a good accent for a cop—contemptuous, authoritative, and intolerant of back talk.

Through most of his career, Cannatella got along with the Indians—the Wild Magnolias, the Geronimo Hunters, Fi-Yi-Yi, the Wild Tchoupitoulas, and others. These tribes of working-class African-American men, as formal in their rituals as Masons or Elks, honor the Native Americans who took in escaped slaves. They compete to create the most lavish faux-Indian costumes and the most outrageous songs and dances. In the early years of Mardi Gras, blacks were banned from the main parades, and "masking Indian," as it's called, was a ruse for inclusion. The Indians eventually began participating in a second annual parade as well, on St. Joseph's Night, an Italian-American holiday celebrated on March 19th. Participants whoop through the streets in beaded, primary-colored, three-dimensional polyester-fleece costumes, topped by four-foot-wide headdresses of hot-pink or chromium-yellow fake feathers, shot through with rhinestones and multicolored glass jewels. One place they traditionally gather is A. L. Davis Park, in a rough Sixth District neighborhood not far from where Tim Bruneau found the dead woman.

During his first two years as Sixth District commander, Cannatella continued his predecessor's practice of giving the Indians free police protection on St. Joseph's Night, though he regularly charged an uptown Irish club thousands of dollars for police services at its annual parades. "Everybody knows Indians don't do permits," he told me in October. "There's a heritage issue here. They're always drunk, and selling alcohol on the street, and for years everybody looked the other way. But if you try to stop it you'll have a riot." In 2005, though, Cannatella allowed his police pride to get the better of him. He made no plans for extra crowd control on St. Joseph's Night, because, he said, nobody from the Indians called to let him know they would be gathering. The Indians, he insisted, should come to him. "It's incumbent upon them to do that," he said, defiantly thrusting out his chin. "I got no letter, no call. How do I know they're not having it on the eighteenth, or the twentieth?"

Cannatella was at home on March 19th, packing for his first vacation in five years, when a neighborhood resident called to say the park was filling with drunken Indians, one of whom was carrying a shotgun decorated with feathers like a spear. Cannatella radioed the station, then drove to the park. His officers—some only a couple of years out of high school—were using their sirens and loudspeakers to push the Indians out of the street and into the park. They roughed up several people and arrested one. "Did they say dumb, vulgar things?" Cannatella said. "Probably. I wish they hadn't."

Community outrage was heated, and refused to subside. Eventually, the city council scheduled a "reconciliation" session, for June 27th. Cannatella, in his white dress-uniform shirt, sat up front, facing the council. A full house of neighborhood activists, reporters, and the chiefs of the tribes sat behind him. The first chief to speak was the eighty-two-year-old Chief of Chiefs, Allison (Tootie) Montana, the most celebrated craftsman of Indian costumes. Montana walked slowly to the microphone and began recounting forty years of N.O.P.D. mistreatment of Indians. Several minutes into his speech, he coughed once, collapsed to the floor, and stopped breathing. As the room exploded in shouting, Cannatella and another officer performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation, but Montana was dead. To the Indians, it was as if the Chief of Chiefs had fallen in battle.

Thus began a summerlong decline in the department's stature and morale. In July, there were two days of street fights and other mayhem in which twelve people were killed or wounded by gunfire; in August the department announced that it had arrested two of its own, one for writing bad checks, the other for rape.

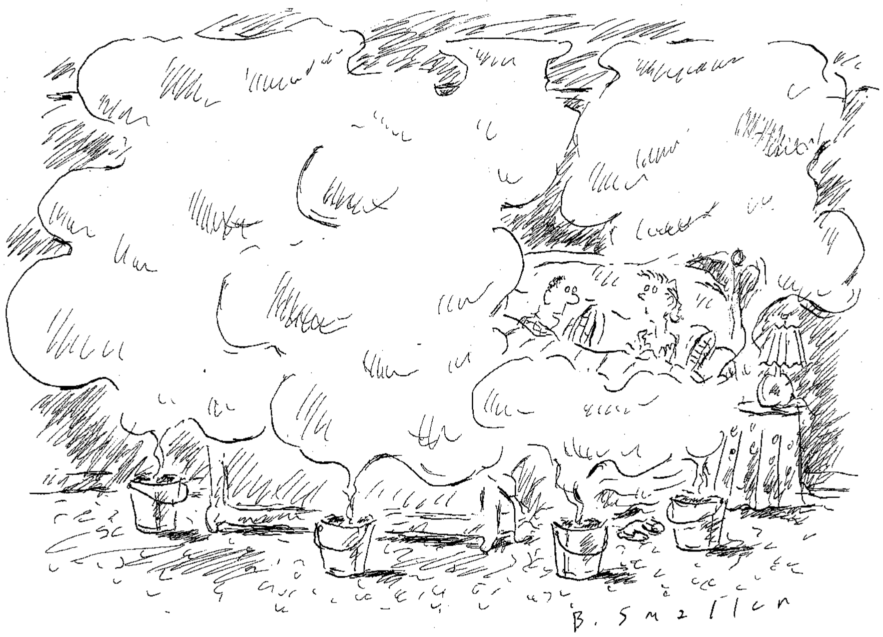
August 27th was White Buffalo Day, another important ritual on the Indian calendar. It fell on a Saturday, and the Indians dedicated ceremonies in Congo Square to the memory of Tootie Montana. That night, the National Weather Service reported that Hurricane Katrina, in the Gulf of Mexico, had made an unexpected right turn. The storm was no longer headed toward the Texas coast but toward the city of New Orleans.

WAKE UP!
Shanahan
MIMOSA'S WITNESSES

Planning is an ant's business, and New Orleans tends to view itself as a grasshopper town. "People here aren't serious," a white-haired member of an old Mardi Gras krewe told me one evening. "Look at us. All our energy goes into floats and suits and parties. I guess it's the difference between being Mediterranean and northern European." The City that Care Forgot wasn't one to dwell overmuch on hypothetical bad times. Even while local officials conjured the spectre of a catastrophic flood in their pleas to Congress for levee funding, the city failed to prepare adequately for the event. In 2004, the police department produced an elaborate hurricane plan and issued it to all its commanders. But it stayed on their bookshelves. The department didn't run exercises to familiarize officers with the plan. Few officers I spoke to even knew it existed.

On the Saturday that Katrina took its unexpected right turn, Mayor Nagin signed a proclamation declaring a state of emergency. He asked residents to evacuate and, in a clause that led to untold mischief, authorized police to commandeer private property "necessary to cope with the local disaster emergency." Police started in on the second directive almost immediately. Doug Stead, president of a large downtown car dealership called Sewell Cadillac Chevrolet, was on his way to Lafayette, Louisiana, at about 10 A.M. on Sunday—some fifteen hours before Katrina hit—when an employee called to say he'd seen N.O.P.D. officers driving around Metairie, a suburb west of New Orleans, in new Cadillac Escalades with Sewell license-plate frames on them. The employee wanted to know whether the officers had permission. They didn't. Stead spent the next nine days in Lafayette wondering how many cars the police had taken and whether they had sealed up the dealership when they left.

Most of New Orleans, including police headquarters, on South Broad Street, lies below sea level. As the storm approached, officers tucked hundreds of patrol cars into low garages to pro-



"I thought dry ice would enhance the mood."

tect them from wind, or moved them to highway overpasses, where they would be safe from the flooding that occurs in the city during any heavy rainstorm. By about 2 A.M. on Monday, August 29th, Katrina's winds were so strong that uprooted palm trees were flying down Canal Street, in the words of one cop, "like torpedoes," and police cancelled patrols; responding to calls would have been too dangerous. That night, electricity failed throughout the city.

In the morning, while Tim Bruneau was trying to find a place to deliver the dead woman, floodwater swamped police headquarters, the crime lab, the evidence room, the armory, the jail, and all the police cars stored in low garages. The cruisers parked on overpasses were stranded; in all, the department lost about a quarter of its cars in the first hours of the flood. Radio antennas were destroyed; the department's primary radio system died later that day.

Like everybody else in New Orleans, Tim Bayard, the commander of the vice and narcotics squads, assumed on Monday morning that the Hurricane Katrina drama was over. Bayard, whose close-clipped hair and steel-framed eyeglasses give him the look of a high-school science teacher, got one bad piece of news after another: the Lower Ninth Ward, the Seventeenth Street and London Street Canals, the loss of Police Headquarters. He gathered his officers in the valet-parking driveway of Harrah's casino, on Canal Street in the Central Business District. He tried to reach his commanders by cell phone, but the exchange that handled the 504 area code had perished in the storm. It became clear that the department had no way to respond to the crisis: no boats, no cars, no ammunition, and no way to communicate effectively. Officers who were used to taking their orders by radio were drifting aimlessly around the city. Bayard knew of a mobile command post housed in an eighteen-wheeler's trailer and equipped with radios, generators, and emergency supplies, but somebody had moved it out of the city for protection from wind and flooding, and no one knew where it was. Instead, the police were trying to fight the disaster with a couple of picnic tables and a few folding chairs set up in a casino driveway. They had nothing to eat, nothing to drink, no cots, no place to relieve themselves.

And, at Harrah's, no chief. Superintendent Compass spent the night of the storm in the Hyatt Regency with his wife, who was eight months pregnant, and his three-year-old daughter. Mayor Nagin and members of his staff slept there, too. They turned a ballroom into their headquarters, with desks for the power company, the sewage-and-water department, the military, the fire department, and other services. Compass told me recently that he made forays into the city to talk to his officers, but Bayard didn't see him at the Harrah's command post during the first three days of the crisis. Aside from one brief encounter with a *Times-Picayune* reporter on the second day, Compass was also invisible to the press during that period. Many cops believe he left town; Compass insisted to me that he did not.

On Tuesday, as water inched toward the Sixth District station, Anthony Cannatella told his cops to clear out. The few cars they had saved were low on gas or had flat tires from running over debris. The cops crammed into them and fled across the Mississippi River—on the soaring Crescent City Connection bridge—to the parking lot of a McDonald's in the wind-battered but unflooded part of the city called Algiers. Across the street, people were ransacking a convenience store. Cannatella told several officers to chase them off and salvage what was left: a few boxes of Pop-Tarts, soda, and some bottled water.

Officers could still use their radios as short-range walkie-talkies, but the single band was so crowded with police, fire, and ambulance calls from the extended metropolitan area that it was all but useless. After nightfall, Cannatella picked up a call from then Deputy Chief Warren Riley, who told him that boats were leaving people from the Ninth Ward on Interstate 10, and that he should send patrol cars to take them out of the city. Cannatella grabbed seven officers to accompany him, and in seven of the district's precious remaining cars they sped back over the bridge to the Louisa Street exit, where hundreds of wet, terrified people milled about in the heat. A hodgepodge of fishing skiffs, makeshift rafts, and waterskiing boats were approaching with more.

Riley, who is short, powerfully built, and very dark, emerged from the crowd. He projects none of Compass's warm exuberance; he's all business. A twenty-three-year veteran, he ran (unsuccessfully) for Orleans Parish sheriff last year, with Nagin's support. Despite his political connections, he is regarded by most cops as sensible and hardworking. He told Cannatella to ferry people to the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, a complex of cavernous exhibition halls that had not previously been thought of as a shelter. The Superdome, which was guarded by hundreds of cops and soldiers and was stocked with food and water, was inaccessible to cars.

Cannatella and his officers dropped carloads of traumatized refugees, each clutching a few belongings, at the huge darkened building. They had no food or water to give them and no idea what predators might await them in the center's stifling heat. The Convention Center is Eighth District police territory, but no police or soldiers were assigned to receive the refugees, and officers visited only intermittently during the five days that the center served as an impromptu shelter.

The Sixth District police left the McDonald's parking lot Wednesday morning, and set up housekeeping in their own district, in the parking lot of the Wal-Mart on Tchoupitoulas Street, near the Third Street Wharf—the former site of the St. Thomas housing projects. It was, Cannatella felt, a fitting place for them to rally. Some years ago, as part of an ambitious plan to "deconcentrate" poverty, the city had torn down St. Thomas. Residents—including gang members and drug dealers—dispersed all over the city, violating various gangs' territories. "They didn't ask us first—they didn't do anything but move 'em," Cannatella told me. "They started an instant turf war." He spread his hands as if to say, "What are you gonna do?"

Cannatella found the Wal-Mart's glass doors smashed and the place full of people grabbing merchandise. He and his officers chased them away, then took a refrigerated truck from the nearby Brown's Dairy lot and filled it with the spoiling groceries from Wal-Mart's coolers. Sabrina Richardson and four other female officers liberated some butane tanks, pots and pans, and a metal rack with which to jury-rig a stove. They set up a kitchen in the parking lot, feeding two meals of gumbo, pasta, or burgers to a hundred officers a day. The mission of the Sixth District police officers, at this point, was their own survival.

They called their outpost Fort Wal-Mart. The short-range function of their radios dwindled and died, because the radios took only rechargeable batteries, which were useless in a city with no electricity.

MARILYN MONROE

Because the pact beneath ordinary life (*If you*
give me enough money, you can continue to fuck me—)

induces in each person you have ever known
panic and envy before the abyss,

what you come from is craziness, what your
mother and her mother come from is

craziness, panic of the animal
smelling what you have in store for it.

Your father's name, she said, is too
famous not to be hidden.

Kicking against the pricks,
she somehow injured her mind.

You are bitter all that releases
transformation in us is illusion.

Poor, you thought being rich is utterly
corrosive; and watched with envy.

Posing in the garden,
squinting into the sun.

—*Frank Bidart*

Cannatella ordered his cops not to use up their gasoline by patrolling. One day, Richardson violated Cannatella's no-patrols rule, taking a short drive onto the interstate, which was elevated above the floodwaters. Masses of desperate people crowded the searing asphalt. As she rolled past, they banged on her windows and begged her to stop. Terrified, she floored the accelerator. She never went back. At night, Richardson washed her sweat-soaked uniform in one wastebasket, rinsed it in another, and laid it on the hood of her cruiser. Then she crawled into the passenger seat, gun in hand, to sleep. All the officers slept holding their guns.

Four days after abandoning the young woman's body, Tim Bruneau was driving with another detective, Alan Bartholomew, to a sergeant's house to take showers.

"Let's go to my house," Bartholomew said.

"What?" Bruneau asked.

"I'm leaving," Bartholomew said.

"For good?"

"Yeah."

Bruneau drove in silence. As they pulled up to Bartholomew's house, he said, "Look, don't take stuff we can use." Bartholomew gave Bruneau his M-16, his bulletproof vest, his pistol, and his police credentials. "As long as you can live with what you're doing, more power to you," Bruneau said, and drove away. A couple of days later, the police announced that as many as five hundred cops were missing—about a third of the force.

Part of the problem was that the protocols that normally keep cops in line vanished during the crisis. On the same night that Bartholomew deserted, Bruneau answered a looting call at a pharmacy. When he turned on his car's flashing blue lights and siren, he expected the looters to run. Instead, they started shooting. As Bruneau shifted into reverse, he leaned out the window with his Glock and squeezed off a few shots. Normally, when a cop fires his gun investigators rope off the scene, find the bullets, figure trajectories, and write it up. But Bruneau, who had spent a day chauffeuring a corpse, knew that the department had no time for such procedures. Warren Riley told me later that the department eventually investigated every shooting by an officer in which someone was hit by a bullet; there were seven instances, four of them fatal, during the first month of the crisis.

Without a proper jail, the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections had turned Union Station, a combined bus and train depot, into a lockup. The terminal looked normal, with its schedules and newsstand, but the bus platform was a cellblock. High chain-link fences topped with razor wire ran along either side, and sullen men stood in clumps or sat on the floor. Wired to the fence were crude hand-lettered signs: "Cell 5 Federal," "Cell 3 Felony." Most of the prisoners had been arrested in suburban Jefferson Parish. No N.O.P.D. officers I spoke with knew about the makeshift jail. One captain told me that when his officers caught looters they photographed them with their booty and turned them loose, hoping to arrest them later on a warrant.

Much has been made of looting by N.O.P.D. officers. Most, like those of the Sixth District, took what they needed to stay on the job. Some behaved criminally. One band of cops turned a downtown hotel into a private club, terrorizing the hotel engineer and chilling beer with a generator stolen from Tulane Hospital. Another gang holed up in a Holiday Inn in a nearby suburb, and when a local cop confronted them they threw him on the floor and pressed a shotgun to his head.

Richard Pennington has no compunction about criticizing the department he used to run. "When officers don't see their commanders, they become renegades," he said as we sat in his office, which is decorated with laminated newspaper clippings extolling his successes in New Orleans and in the tough Anacostia section of Washington, D.C. While watching the Katrina media coverage, Pennington said, "I never saw the chief for three days. I was saying, 'Damn, you watch CNN, where's the police chief?'" Low-lying neighborhoods often flooded during hurricanes when Pennington was the N.O.P.D. chief, and he made a point of driving around with the mayor in a National Guard high-water truck, to let his officers see that he was on the job. "Troops will wait for instruction and guidance," he said. Also, he added, "I had no policy allowing officers to commandeer things. It would have gotten out of control."

Pennington said he was astonished at the number of officers who disappeared during the storm. "I heard them say they might be moving their families," he said. "But we had a policy where twenty-four hours before a storm we'd allow all our cops time to get their families out of the city. Then they had to report back to work. When I watched television and heard them say some of these people left and didn't come back because they're caught in the water, I said, 'How did that happen?'"

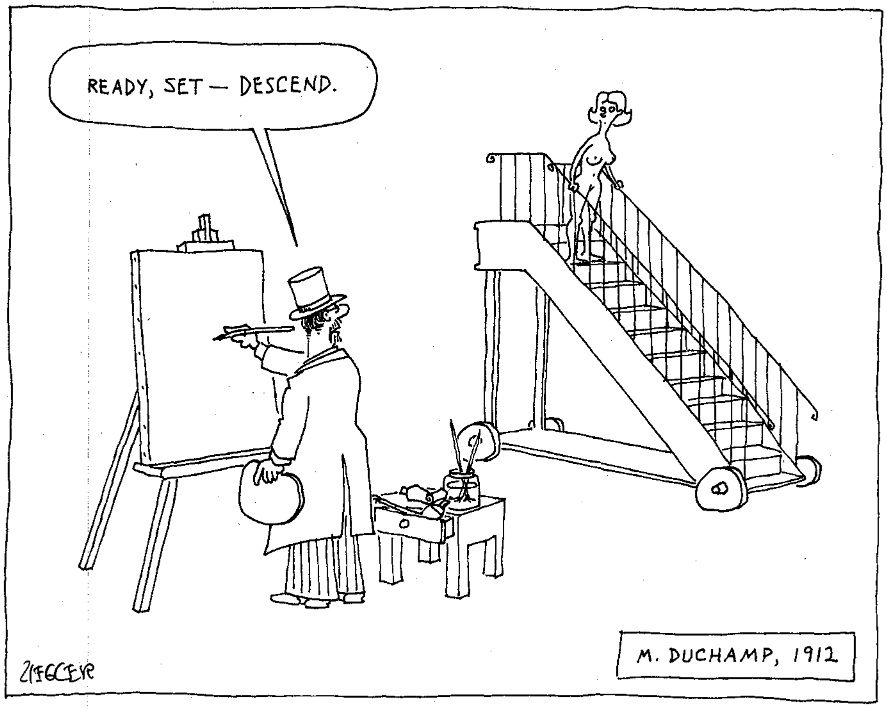
Bayard, the captain of vice and narcotics, and a few other captains organized a makeshift rescue operation out of the Harrah's casino driveway. They divided the city into quadrants, and put out the word that anybody with a boat—officer, civilian, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department—should check in at Harrah's each morning for an assignment. The National Guard, with trucks that could negotiate water as deep as eight feet, also took assignments. Bayard could see helicopters over the city but didn't know whose they were. An aerial view would have helped him assign rescue missions, but he had no means of contacting the pilots. He had no contact with FEMA, and he later found out that FEMA and the N.O.P.D. had unwittingly covered parts of the city in triplicate, delaying by more than a week the intense searching that involved breaking into homes to find survivors. He figures the lack of coördination cost lives.

At four o'clock on the hot afternoon of Friday, September 2nd, Captain Edwin Hosli, Anthony Cannatella's counterpart in the Second District, sloshed through filthy knee-deep water at the corner of Napoleon Avenue and Carondelet Street, directing his own makeshift operation. The smell of rot and gasoline that blanketed the city was strongest here at the water's edge, where floating sewage and garbage gathered in foamy skeins. Hosli, at forty-five, is compact and muscular, with spiky hair and a face that narrows from a wide forehead to a pointed chin. He carried a black semi-automatic assault rifle and wore the same squishy wet shoes and uniform he'd had on since the storm. His wife and children had evacuated the city—he didn't even know where they were—and his house was ruined. Half of the hundred and twenty-three officers under his command were missing. As he climbed aboard a fancy white speedboat, I squeezed in as well.

One of Hosli's lieutenants, a tall, ropy Cajun named Darryl Albert, was fumbling with a screwdriver at the speedboat's ignition, trying to hot-wire it. Another, Eddie Selby, thumbed through the handwritten notes that agitated citizens kept pressing on him, scribbled with the addresses of people who needed rescue. Hosli sat heavily on a vinyl seat, leaned against the barrel of his rifle, and closed his eyes.

Like Cannatella, Hosli is old N.O.P.D. On New Year's Eve, 1972, a Black Panther fatally shot his father, Edwin Hosli, Sr., during a weeklong downtown attack in which four other N.O.P.D. officers were killed. Edwin was twelve. His father's grieving colleagues closed ranks around him, getting him onto the force right after high school.

The speedboat's motor came to life and Hosli sat up, blinking. As we started moving, there was a shout, and a shirtless young man in cutoff jeans ran through the water and leaped aboard. His name was Ryan Asmussen, he said, and he had fifteen years' experience as a Navy diver. "I'm a recovering alcoholic," he added proudly. "I've been living in the Volunteers for America halfway house



around the corner. I want to help."

The boat proceeded slowly up Napoleon Avenue, bumping against sunken cars and fallen trees. Graceful multicolored turn-of-the-century houses reflected prettily in the calm water. The officers ducked a street sign as they rounded the corner onto commercial Claiborne Avenue, and fell silent as their view widened to a panorama of their city. A body floated face down in a used-car lot. The rounded shoulders of another bobbed near a funeral home. The giant root-beer mug that announced Frostop Burgers was upside down and half submerged. On the horizon rose a thick spiral of heavy smoke. A young woman sunbathed on top of a heap of boxed toasters, blenders, and other kitchenware piled into a speedboat moored outside a Walgreens drugstore. She waved nervously and yelled to someone inside the store; the cops cruised past.

A huge gray helicopter scooted in low, sending loose roofing tiles knifing through the air and raising a rotor wash that nearly swamped the cops and drenched everybody on board with filthy spray. The officers waved their arms frantically until the pilot noticed them and veered away. They shook water from their clothes. Around the corner, a man seemed to be drowning, a toothless African-American of indeterminate age, clinging to a pickup-truck toolbox. "Leave me alone! I'm fine!" he yelled, flailing about in the greasy water. "I've got to take my sister her medicine." Asmussen looked straight down from the boat deck into the truck box and cried, "It's full of liquor!" The truck box tipped, filled with water, and sank. "There it goes!" Hosli yelled. "Like the Titanic. It's gone. Now get in the boat." The man was sobbing with fury, thrashing to stay afloat. "I was fine before you got here. Leave me alone!" The cops pulled him aboard, flopping like a fish; he clutched to his chest a blue zippered bag through which the outlines of two bottles showed. Asmussen shook his head with admiration. "That's a real alcoholic," he said.

With a hand on his holstered pistol, Hosli disarmed the man of a hammer and a knife. Sunset crept up through the murky air, and night fell. The man sobbed and kicked the floor of the boat, wailing about his medicine and his sister. "You want her to die!" he kept shouting. Hosli pinched the bridge of his nose and closed his eyes. Then he leaned out with a paddle, determined that the water was only waist-deep, and rolled the man out of the boat. The man was speechless for a moment, then beat his hands on the surface and shrieked invectives as he receded in the darkness.

Hosli's police radio, which had been silent all afternoon, suddenly crackled, and a man's voice said, "Ah, we just got a report that a police officer has taken his own life."

No one spoke. The boat chugged on through the darkness.

The flooding covered eighty per cent of the city, leaving dry only a mile-wide sliver of high ground that recalled how New Orleans came to be known as the Crescent City. The mansions of Carrollton and the Garden District, the tall office buildings of the Central Business District, the French Quarter, and the rougher neighborhoods of Faubourg Marigny and Bywater were squeezed between the floodwater and the river. Those in dry New Orleans during the first week of the crisis hardly ever saw cops, or anyone in authority. Except for some orange-and-white Coast Guard helicopters and a few choppers from the Louisiana National Guard, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday went by with little sign of the police or outside help. To those left in the city, it felt as if government at all levels had vanished, as if not only New Orleans but the nation itself had disappeared. Lurid rumors filled the void. A creepy compulsion to believe the worst distorted what New Orleanians saw, heard, and felt, what they chose to do, and what they would remember.

Looters smashed their way along Canal Street, a diverse commercial strip that divides the Central Business District from the French Quarter, grabbing discount clothing, DVDs, and sneakers. Saks Fifth Avenue was sacked and burned. Burglars along St. Claude, the main commercial avenue bordering Faubourg Marigny, cleared taverns' cashboxes and liquor shelves. In the suburbs, where thieves could use cars to haul booty, they made off with guns, bicycles, and stereos.

Yet what was striking was not how many stores were ransacked but how few. Television crews, their trailers parked on Canal Street, saw the worst. In the French Quarter and the commercial districts along St. Charles Avenue and Magazine Street, storefronts stayed largely intact. Antiques and fine art rested behind unshielded plate-glass windows. People pried open pharmacies and grocery stores, taking diapers, aspirin, food, water, and soft drinks, but left wine and liquor on the shelves, intact.

Even at the Superdome and the Convention Center, signature hellholes of the crisis, peace prevailed. Hundreds of policemen and soldiers kept order in the Superdome. Though half a dozen people died there, mostly from natural causes, nobody was murdered. After six days of misery, without air-conditioning, running water, or working toilets, the citizens lined up politely to be bused out. At the Convention Center, where the miasma of hot garbage, sweat, and feces was sickening, there was one apparent homicide, but evacuees generally took care of one another. A group of young black men brought luggage carts from nearby hotels and used them to gather trash into enormous piles. Those who staggered in with food and water shared it. Even though the police presence was at best intermittent, the windows of stores across the street remained unshattered. A brand-new Chevrolet SSR sat unmolested on a side street.

The citizens of New Orleans tried to weave their own safety net. A casting director and a tax attorney who had never met before the storm commandeered a waterskiing boat to salvage wheelchairs and cots from an abandoned hospital and rescue people from roofs and attics. A curly-haired doctor named Jeff Brumberger painted crude red crosses on the side of a white hearse, loaded it with supplies from deserted hospitals and pharmacies, and roamed the city for days, dispensing care and wisecracks. Mama D, a witchy old woman on Dorgenois Street, stoked charcoal grills in her driveway, feeding whoever walked by. A motherly transsexual on St. Claude Avenue kept her tavern open night and day, dispensing dollar beers and free food to comfort the poor and the bewildered.

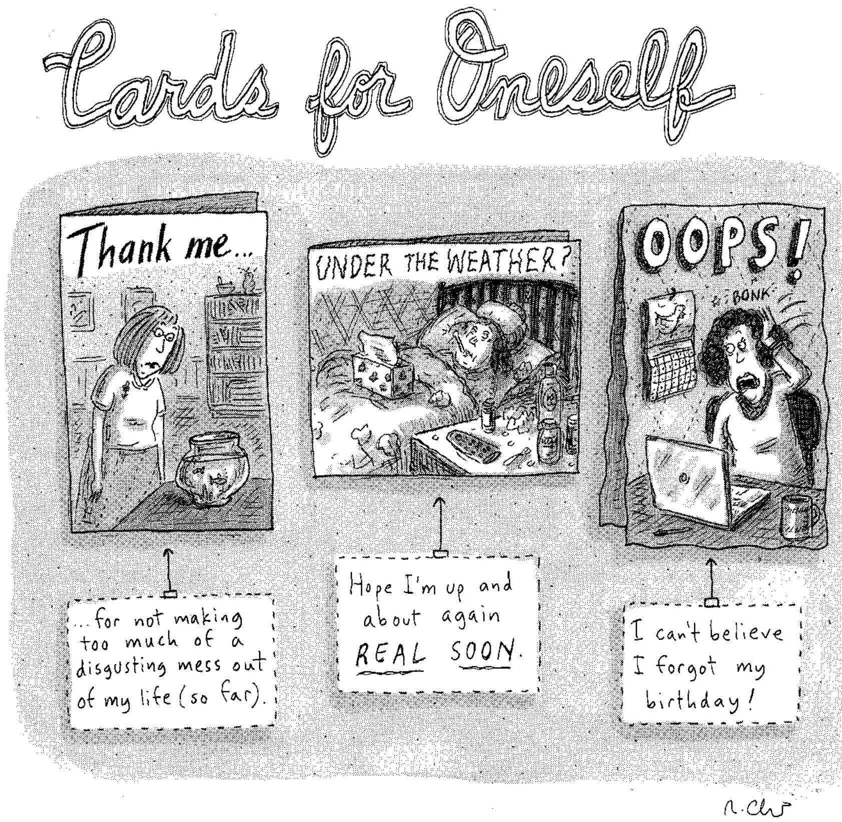
Yet public officials who might have counselled calm did the opposite. Mayor Nagin declared on television that he'd watched "hooligans killing people, raping people," but his spokesperson, Sally Forman, told me that he didn't see them "with his own eyes. He was relying on reports of people in authority." Councilwoman Jackie Clarkson told the Associated Press, "Looting is out of control. The French Quarter has been attacked." Police Superintendent Compass tearfully declared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" that "little babies" were being raped in the Superdome and told a reporter that people had tried to kidnap him. "In hindsight," Compass told me later, "I should have kept my mouth shut."

It was the city's bad luck that, in addition to relentlessly hot weather, there was a new moon that week, and the nights were utterly dark. I gave a ride home late one evening to a man named Jimmy Delery, a black-sheep member of a founding New Orleans family. We drove slowly among fallen oaks and downed power lines cluttering St. Charles Avenue, and as we got out of the car at his house we heard the double click of a shotgun. Two ripply-fit blond men walked toward us in the gloom, shirtless and gleaming with sweat, wearing bandoliers across their chests and holstered sidearms on their hips. The muzzles of their shotguns looked like the entrance to the Holland Tunnel. "Look, guys," Delery said. "I know you're all up on your testosterone, but, please, stay home. Don't be walking around with the guns. You're just going to get people agitated."

The men lowered their guns. "It's not testosterone, Jimmy," one of them said. "It's self-preservation." I noticed that their shotguns were not hunting weapons pressed into emergency service but stainless-steel combat guns with racks of extra shells mounted on the stocks. At some point, these guys had each spent at least eight hundred dollars to be prepared for an occasion like this.

"Yeah, well, whatever it is, I want you, please, to stay near your houses," Jimmy said. "You don't need to be out here, patrolling around." After they left, he said, "They're looking to pop somebody so they can brag, 'I shot a nigger looter in New Orleans.' "

Bob Rue, the rug merchant, described stepping outside with his .38, ready to shoot someone lurking by his neighbor's Porsche. "It's not about the car," he said. "It's about chaos. If you let them get started, there's no telling where it will end." Of all the white people I met that week who had chosen to remain in the city, only two were unarmed. Jimmy had a .45 automatic in his fanny pack. The hearse-driving doctor had a Bulgarian Army pistol in his armrest. The motherly barkeeper kept an automatic shot-


Cards for Oneself
Thank me...
UNDER THE WEATHER?
OOPS!
BONK
...for not making too much of a disgusting mess out of my life (so far).
Hope I'm up and about again REAL SOON.
I can't believe I forgot my birthday!

gun beside the door and a revolver in her back pocket. The blackout, the crowds of evacuees straggling through their neighborhoods—and, above all, the rumors—persuaded some citizens that an apocalyptic race riot was imminent. But, even in the absence of police, the unspeakable didn't come to pass.

For the poor, without resources, the disappearance of authority was genuinely terrifying. Many had never left the city, or southern Louisiana, in all their lives. They faced a terrible choice: turn themselves in to face evacuation or tough it out. If we stay, how long will it be before the power and the water come back on and the grocery stores open? If we go, go where? To the Superdome, where babies are being raped and murdered? To the Convention Center, to get on a bus? A bus to where? (The rumor that evacuees weren't being told their destination before boarding buses turned out to be true.) With no reliable authority to issue information, the holdouts were paralyzed.

National Guard units from as far away as Puerto Rico showed up in force the weekend after the storm. For the most part, they brought no tools other than M-16s—no chain saws or bulldozers, no grappling hooks, generators, or field hospitals. They were not equipped to clear debris, repair power lines, or deliver mass medical care. Like the city's armed residents, they had prepared for an uprising, and stood on street corners nervously fingering their weapons. Kevin Shaughnessy, a courtly, gray-haired sergeant first class of the California National Guard, stopped me on St. Charles Avenue to demand I.D., and, after letting me pass, called me back. "Say, you don't have a map of New Orleans you can spare, do you?" he asked. He also accepted a box of canned food and three gallons of water. "We can sure use it," he said. The active-duty Army showed up, too, in the form of the 82nd Airborne Division, patrolling in full combat gear and snappy maroon berets, but these soldiers had their magazines out of their rifles. I asked a sergeant first class what he and his men were permitted to do, given constitutional constraints against the military enforcing domestic laws. "We're just trick-or-treating," he said. "If I saw someone going in that store right there, I couldn't do anything but radio it in."

That weekend felt like a lawman's Mardi Gras. The dry slice of New Orleans filled not only with federal and state troops but with well-meaning deputy sheriffs and policemen from as far away as Oregon and Michigan—cops whose activities were uncoördinated, who knew nothing of the city, and who were pumped on rumors of violence. They tumbled out of their cars in boxy bulletproof vests, pointing their M-4 carbines every which way, as though expecting incoming rounds. Adding to the Dodge City atmosphere were such private soldiers as those of Blackwater, U.S.A., who lurked on the broad steps of several mansions, draped in automatic weapons. As I sat on the porch of a house on tranquil St. Charles Avenue on the Saturday night after the storm, a red laser dot from a gunsight moved slowly across my chest.

The phrase on the lips of the guest enforcers was "martial law." An Oklahoma Guardsman stopped me Sunday afternoon and ordered me to get out of town. When I told him that the N.O.P.D. was allowing reporters to stay, he said, "It's not up to the police. We're in charge now. The city's under martial law. We're not backing them up anymore—they're backing us up." Later, a California Guardsman whose emblems identified him as Sergeant Kelley pointed an M-4 at me and said, "See this? This is martial law. We're in charge." The Constitution makes no provision for anything called "martial law," though Article I allows for the possibility of calling out militia—even of suspending habeas corpus—in times of unrest. The sole large-scale unrest afflicting New Orleans that weekend was thirst and a hankering to bathe.

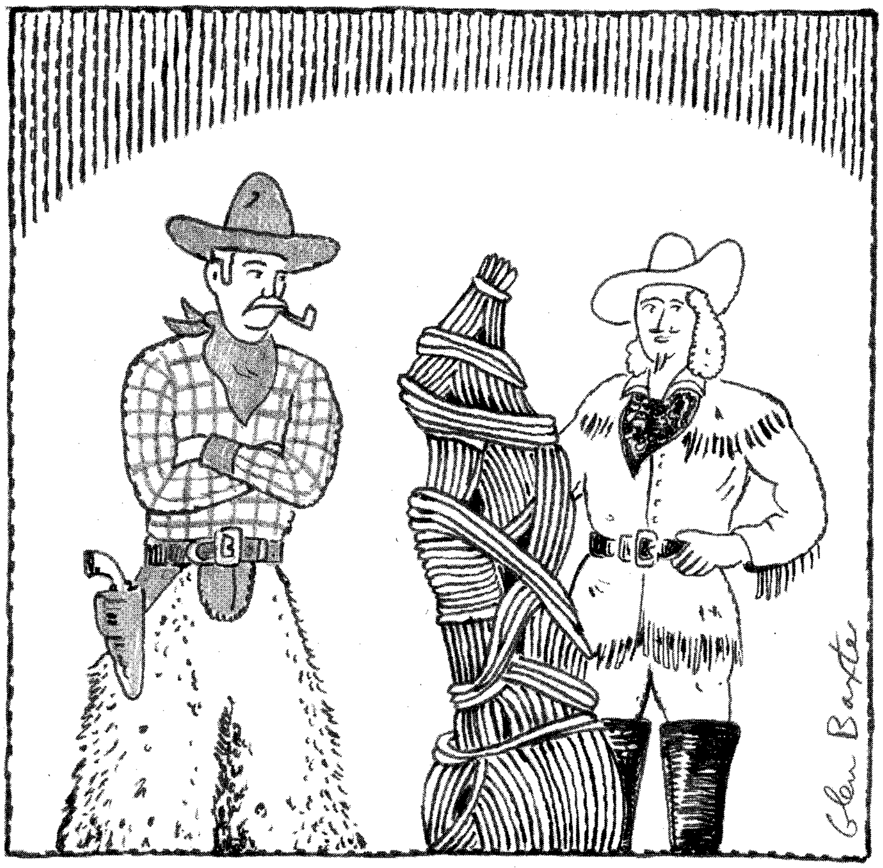
By Sunday, the Convention Center was empty. The only traces of the twenty thousand people who had stayed in its exhibition halls were mountains of moldy clothes, empty water bottles, and the brown plastic wrappings of military rations that had arrived, finally, with the buses. It was spooky: twenty thousand people gone within twenty-four hours.

On Tuesday, September 6th, Mayor Nagin—lacking a computer, or even a typewriter—signed a four-page handwritten "Promulgation of Emergency Order" that directed the police, the Fire Department, and "any branch of the U.S. military" to "compel the evacuation of all persons from the city of New Orleans, regardless of whether such persons are on private property or do not desire to leave." Nagin's order frightened the holdouts. Each lawman and soldier seemed to interpret it differently. At Lee Circle, two Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents told a couple of old men sitting outside drinking beer that they had to leave the city at once. "We're using the A.T.M. method," they barked. "Today we *ask*. Tomorrow we *tell*. The day after that, we *make* you leave." The men nodded politely, and were still sitting there several days later. On St. Claude Avenue, policemen were ordering people to leave or risk being shot. On Prentiss Avenue, Guardsmen hauled a black fifty-seven-year-old social worker named Ernest Timmons from his house and drove him forcibly to the airport, from where, he told the *Times-Picayune*, he was flown to Salt Lake City. On the other hand, soldiers calling at the Carrollton home of an engineer merely told him that leaving would be a good idea.

When I tried to leave New Orleans late that week, driving to the Jefferson Parish line on one of the two remaining roads out, officers of the Springboro, Ohio, police department and soldiers of the Oklahoma National Guard refused to let me pass. As frantic drivers lurched through three-point turns, I asked the soldier in charge if he'd been told about the mandatory evacuation. "Sir, turn your vehicle around," he said.

On Thursday, September 8th, Vice-President Dick Cheney was expected in New Orleans, and television reporters were setting up cameras in Harrah's driveway, near Tim Bayard's picnic tables. A medical team offered free tetanus shots. Volunteers manning barbecue grills served hamburgers to anybody who walked by—police officer, soldier, reporter, FEMA official—and the air was thick with greasy smoke. Superintendent Compass showed up for this occasion, in a crisp white dress-uniform shirt with four gold stars embroidered on the epaulets. The cameras surrounded him. Off to the side of the grills stood a man who looked wild enough to draw the attention of the Secret Service. It was Anthony Cannatella. He was wearing a filthy white T-shirt, and he clenched and unclenched his enormous fists as he rocked from one foot to the other. "What a clusterfuck," he muttered. "I ain't got time for this shit." His eye fell on Superintendent Compass, who was talking into a reporter's microphone. "Look at that guy, acting the hero. I need to be back with my officers, saving people. Fucking Vice-President. Come down here and salute, I'm done. I'll take my forty and go."

I returned to Harrah's the next day to try to clear up the question of martial law and who was in charge of New Orleans. Compass was posing for photographs with California sheriffs' deputies. When he finished, he sat in a folding chair between two cars, his hands in his lap. He slumped there alone, taking in the scene. I asked whether the Oklahoma Guardsman was correct that the N.O.P.D. was subordinate to the military. "I am in charge of all law-enforcement aspects," Compass said. "Does it look like I'm not in charge?" I asked if he felt cut off, with no phone, no radio, and no staff to help him. He rose from his chair. "Does it look like I'm not in charge?" he asked twice more. "I don't spend all day here!" And he walked away.



"My work addresses the core issues at the interface of gender politics and contemporary basket weaving," he explained.

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The New Orleans City Council did not meet in full until September 27th. The chamber was inaccessible, so the seven council members gathered in a boardroom at Louis Armstrong International Airport. Half an hour before the meeting, the news came over the radio that Compass had resigned as chief of police. The radio announcers were stunned into silence. They and their call-in listeners had spent weeks vilifying officers who abandoned their posts in the city's hour of need, and the Chief was now doing essentially the same thing. The room was crowded with hotelkeepers wanting to know if the city's water was safe for guests to bathe in; real-estate brokers wanting to hear a plan for drying out title records; restaurateurs hoping for a temporary waiver of health regulations; and ordinary citizens eager to hear when the rubble would be removed and services restored.

The council members proceeded to pack about twenty minutes of useful business into five hours of storytelling, self-congratulation, venting of racial mistrust, and false-hope-raising applause lines. Arguments dragged on about the use of the word "black" versus "African-American," about construction companies not hiring "brothers with felony records," about why only houses on the poor side of St. Charles Avenue were red-tagged for demolition. (It was the side that flooded.) "Our people need to be made not ninety per cent whole, not ninety-five per cent whole, but one hundred per cent whole!" the council president, Oliver Thomas, declared to a rousing cheer. The council members were as traumatized as any New Orleanians—four of them had lost their homes—so some cathartic group therapy was to be expected. But, as the meeting wore on, people in the crowd began whispering to one another, "What about Compass?" A FEMA representative was patiently absorbing the council's wrath when Mayor Nagin walked into the room, alone, wearing a blue-and-white golf shirt. He slipped into a chair in the back, rested his chin on his chest, and closed his eyes until called to the podium to report on repairs. When he finished, Eddie Sapir, an at-large councilman, said, "We don't even know if the news about Chief Compass is true." "It's true," Nagin said. "He's a hero as far as I'm concerned. He performed very well during the storm. He asks everyone to respect his privacy."

A few weeks later, I talked with Nagin in the downtown Sheraton, and he was so tired that his eyes often closed while he spoke, and when he listened his face relaxed into a middle-distance stare. He was still cagey about whether he had fired Compass. "Before the storm, he was in decent shape," Nagin said. But his wife was about to have a baby, and he had his daughter to consider. Nagin had been shaken by the police suicides—there had been a second as well—during the flood, and when Compass said, "Look, man, I've done my share," Nagin didn't try to talk him out of it. "If someone says they want to leave, I'm not going to tell them otherwise," Nagin said. "I'm not a psychologist." Compass wouldn't discuss the circumstances of his leaving with me. "That part of my life is over," he said.

One thing that went better than anybody expected was the pumping. After a couple of weeks under a brutal subtropical sun, the water covering the city's streets had become an opaque, semi-gelatinous brew of sewage, fluids leaked from submerged cars, and bodies of rodents, cats, dogs, and people. Fumes rising from the surface caused a tickly cough, and an hour in a rescue boat raised tiny white bumps on the skin. It was hard to imagine the stuff leaving. But by the end of September the city's ingenious network of culverts, canals, and pumping stations had pushed it all out of the city and back into Lake Pontchartrain. New Orleans emerged smashed and muddy. In vast regions, not even birds broke the silence.

At St. Patrick's Church, on Camp Street—one of the first to reopen—the congregation for the Tridentine Latin Mass on September 25th consisted of fifteen N.O.P.D. cops, who knelt with their guns on their hips, the murmur of their police radios competing with the liturgy. "We pray," the Reverend Stanley Klores said to the tops of their bowed heads, "that those in civil authority will not succumb to the temptations of this world. Lord, hear our prayer." "Lord, hear our prayer," the officers responded.

The church's counterweight, Bourbon Street, was also starting to come alive. I walked its length several times one night during the last week of September, and each time another bar crew was taking down barstools and plugging in a jukebox. Tropical Isle, the Steak Pit, Café Lafitte in Exile, and Bourbon Street Blues Company were roaring, the music drowning out the constant growl of generators. Outside the Steak Pit, a ten-year-old boy named Daniel held a sign that read "HUGE ASS BEERS TO GO." On the sidewalk in front of Alex Patout's Louisiana Restaurant, a wizened cinder of a chef stirred a cannibal pot of spaghetti sauce on a gas burner. The smell, cutting through the vomit-and-mold reek that hung over the city, was heavenly. Except for a few buff F.B.I. women carrying Glocks, a reedy scientist from the E.P.A., and about a dozen determined, don't-joke-about-it dog-rescuers from the Humane Society, the Bourbon Street crowd was all strapping men from myriad law-enforcement agencies, in camouflage fatigues, golf shirts, or T-shirts advertising restoration companies—LVI Services, Belfor—their guns at their sides. Noticeably absent was the New Orleans Police Department; a few cops leaned sullenly into cell phones at the entrance to the Royal Sonesta Hotel, whose formerly radiant ballroom had become the new Police Headquarters.

By then, hardly anyone was left in New Orleans to police. Cannatella's Sixth District officers moved back to their station house and made desultory patrols, but mostly they gathered around a couple of long folding tables in the open-sided garage under the station—with no electricity, it was the least oppressively hot place to sit—and occupied themselves with such tasks as cleaning pistols that had been submerged for several weeks. They wore purple cards around their necks announcing, in big yellow letters, "ECSTASY." Most of the eight hundred and ninety cops who had lost their homes were living on the cruise ship of that name, docked behind the Convention Center. Tim Bruneau wore no "ECSTASY" badge, because he'd been expelled from the ship for pulling a gun on another officer and a crewman. "I was sleeping!" he told me. "They screwed up and assigned my room to someone else, and when they came barging in I freaked out! Forgive me! I asked them, 'Where am I supposed to go now?' And you know what they said? They said, 'We don't care.' "

The adrenaline high that had sustained many cops through the crisis was wearing off. They complained about the cramped conditions aboard the Ecstasy, about unpaid overtime throughout the crisis, about case files lost in the flooded evidence room. Tim Bayard, the vice-and-narcotics commander, finally found the mobile command post he had needed so badly the first week of the flood: driving through the Lower Ninth Ward, he saw it in a parking lot. It had been commandeered by firemen. He was so angry he didn't stop, for fear of getting into a fistfight.

"You made that diagnosis just to be mean."

Anthony Cannatella did not take his forty and go. He swung his unmarked gold Crown Victoria into the Sixth's garage one October afternoon, and called for everybody's attention. Shaved and cleaned up, he looked powerful, with his bald head, slit mouth, and bull shoulders. Patrolwoman Kristi Foret, the rookie who had been stranded on her roof two days and then had helped her rescuers save other victims, put her arm around him, and he hugged her to his side while delivering a briefing. "We should have our overtime on Thursday or Friday of this week. Start checking your bank accounts on Friday," he said. "Next, I got a bunch of off-duty details to announce. Wal-Mart will pay thirty dollars an hour. They need two during the day, two at night. They pay every Friday at Marrero School, in cash. Now, don't fuck with the I.R.S.—Wal-Mart's not going to not report what they're paying for security. Fuck with the I.R.S., they don't give a shit about ten Katrinas. They'll shove it right up your ass. Next: We still got Wal-Mart guns missing. Four shotguns. Turn them in, no questions asked. They'll be on the A.T.F. hot list. Don't embarrass yourself." He ended with a joke. "Next: There's a T-shirt going around. It's blue, and it says, 'Katrina 2005: I stayed, I worked, I was there, I am—the N.O.P.D.' I asked for another two hundred and fifty, in yellow: 'I ran, I left my buddies, I was—a coward.' "

"You're not assigned here anymore," Cannatella had told a sergeant who deserted and then tried to come back. Alan Bartholomew, who ran out on Tim Bruneau, was unrepentant and gave reasons that sounded a lot like what Nagin says Compass told him. "Look, man, I stayed that whole week," he said, when I reached him by phone in Jefferson Parish. "No electricity, no radio communications. I hadn't heard from my wife and kids. . . . I finally decided this, this job . . ." He sighed, looking for words to describe the thanklessness of being a New Orleans cop. "I decided that my family was more important." More than a hundred and fifty officers were fired or left the department after failing to perform during the crisis. Another forty are under investigation.

On another afternoon, an N.O.P.D. patrol car pulled up outside the Sixth District with a big-screen TV hanging out of the trunk—an attention-getting sight, given the tales of cops looting. The officers swung open the back of one of three eighteen-wheeler trailers parked on the street, revealing a mountain of bicycles, appliances, diapers, stereos, office furniture. The cops hoisted the big-screen TV into the back. "When we recover looted goods, this is where we keep it," Cannatella said. "We figure it's all from Wal-Mart. They've already written it all off, so I'm going to ask them to donate it to my officers who lost everything."

Nagin's emergency order authorizing cops to commandeer private property required that owners be compensated. Doug Stead, at Sewell Cadillac, lost more than two hundred cars—some to cops, some to looters who followed when the police left the dealership open—but he has not received a call about the cars from either the police department or the city attorney.

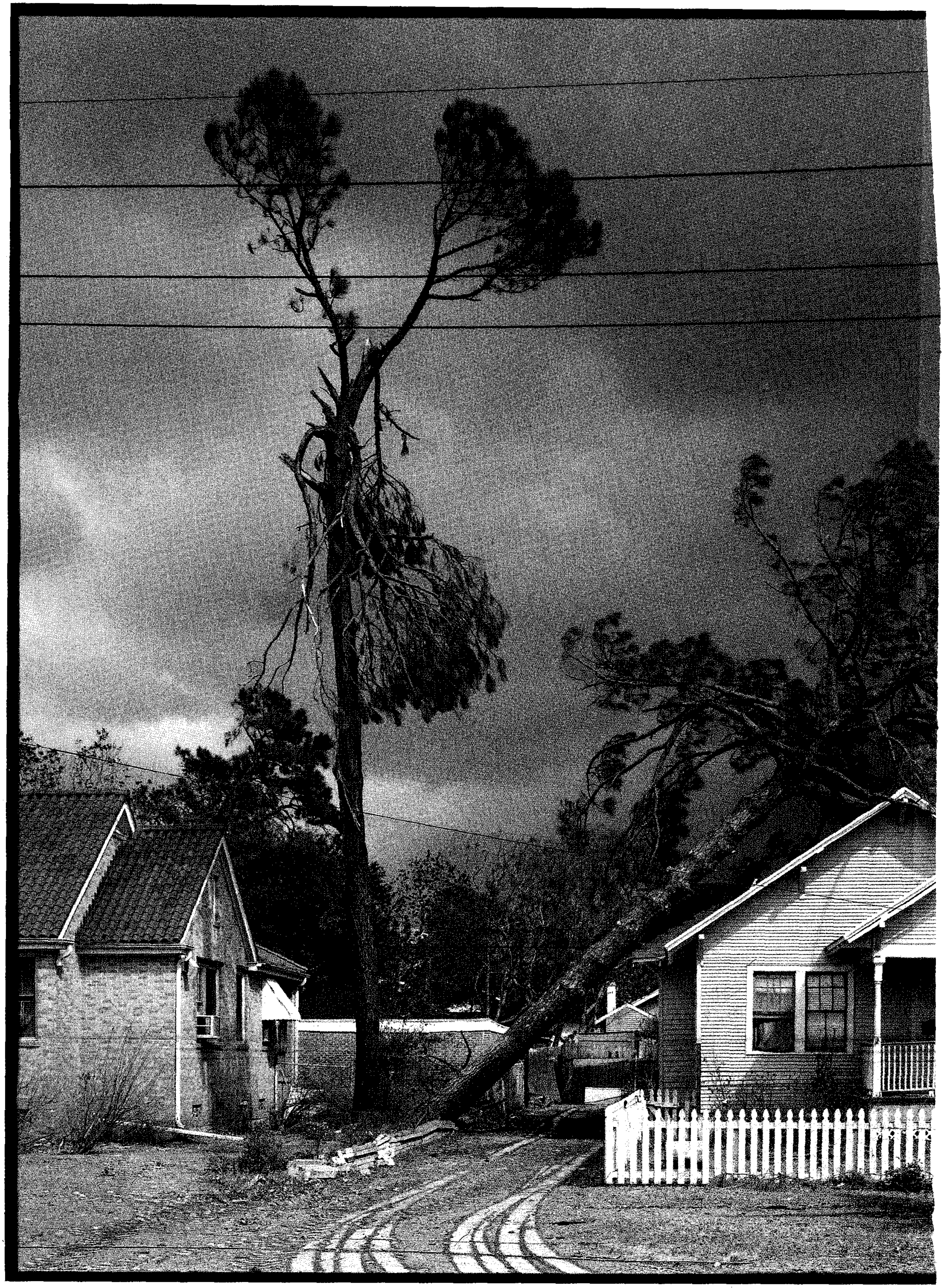
A sense of failure, and of failures to come, hangs over the department. Frank Young, a laconic Sixth District detective sergeant who shuttled people to the Convention Center on the night of the flood, pointed to the slogan on the fender of a patrol car on loan to the N.O.P.D. from another city—"Excellence in Policing"—and said, "Obviously not ours." He drove the car late one night to his house in Lakeview, which borders the ruptured Seventeenth Street Canal. Standing in the back door of his bungalow, he shined a flashlight into the kitchen. The refrigerator lay on its side, a moldy sofa was wedged in the doorway, and black ooze covered the granite countertops he'd installed himself. "Today, it finally hit me," he said softly. "I woke up and thought, There's nothing here for me. Not at work. Not at home. What did we accomplish? Nothing. We took such an ass-whipping. We didn't stop the flooding. We didn't stop the looting. The whole city got destroyed. We lost."

Warren Riley, the new chief, still insists that the N.O.P.D. didn't fail but was overwhelmed. "You take any military commander—any law-enforcement commander—this was a far more formidable opponent than anyone has had to deal with," he said. John Casbon, the president of the New Orleans Police Foundation, a private agency that raises money for training and equipment, said all American cities need to take better care of their police. "Nobody gives a shit about cops anywhere," Casbon said. "They get paid nothing. We don't give them the equipment. That's the lesson here." Lots of cops, though, think that a more professional department would have done better. "That they had no cars and no gasoline isn't important. You put them on foot beats. You put them on bicycles," Felix Loicano, the former Public Integrity Division commander, said. "If you have to take cars, you sign them out in an orderly fashion and then secure the building, because now it's your responsibility."

Yes, the levees should have been built stronger or better, the city should have had an evacuation plan for those without cars, the governor should have called for help earlier, and FEMA should have responded more vigorously. But the police owned the failure. However much other agencies pass the buck, cops know they're responsible for the safety of a city.

Tim Bruneau used to think of the department as family, and he still thinks of his district that way. But now he's eager to leave. New Orleans still reminds him of Panama, but in a bad way: autocratic, incompetent, corrupt. "I'm leaving first chance I get," Bruneau told me. "I'm going to the University of North Texas to study emergency management. I've given this city my health, my physical ability, my little finger, and everything I own. Now they want more, and I have nothing left."

Cannatella is expecting an exodus. At one of his roll-call briefings in the garage, he made a case for standing by the city and the battered, despised police department that he has served since graduating from high school. "Every one of you has been here from the first, and I know you're contemplating your options," he said. "Some of you are thinking that this big fat overtime check is coming—maybe you'll take it and go. If that's what you want to do, I'm not angry." He stopped, emotionally gesturing with his big hands while searching for the right words. "But this is a history-making event. Out of this will be a new city, and there's no new city without cops." ♦

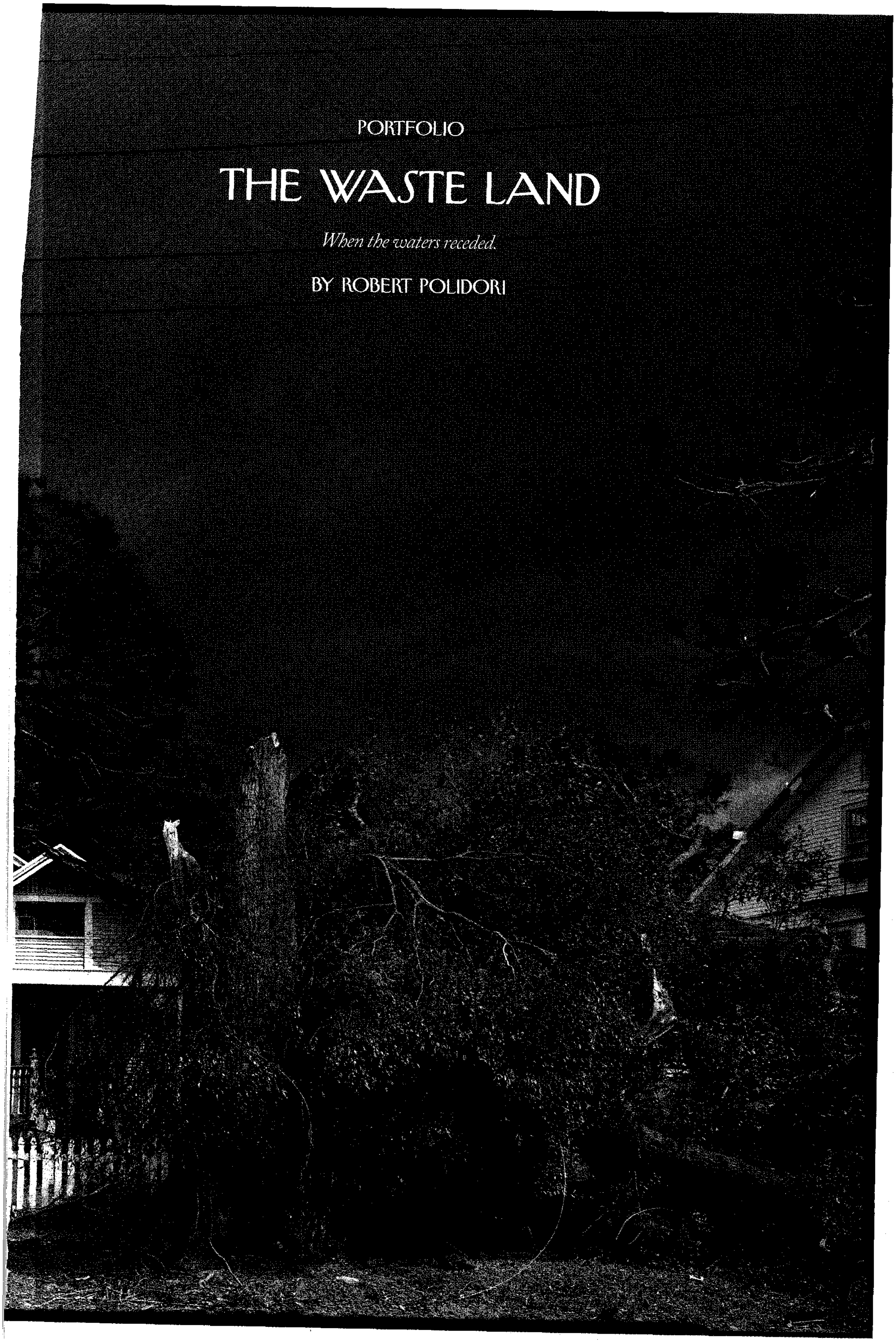


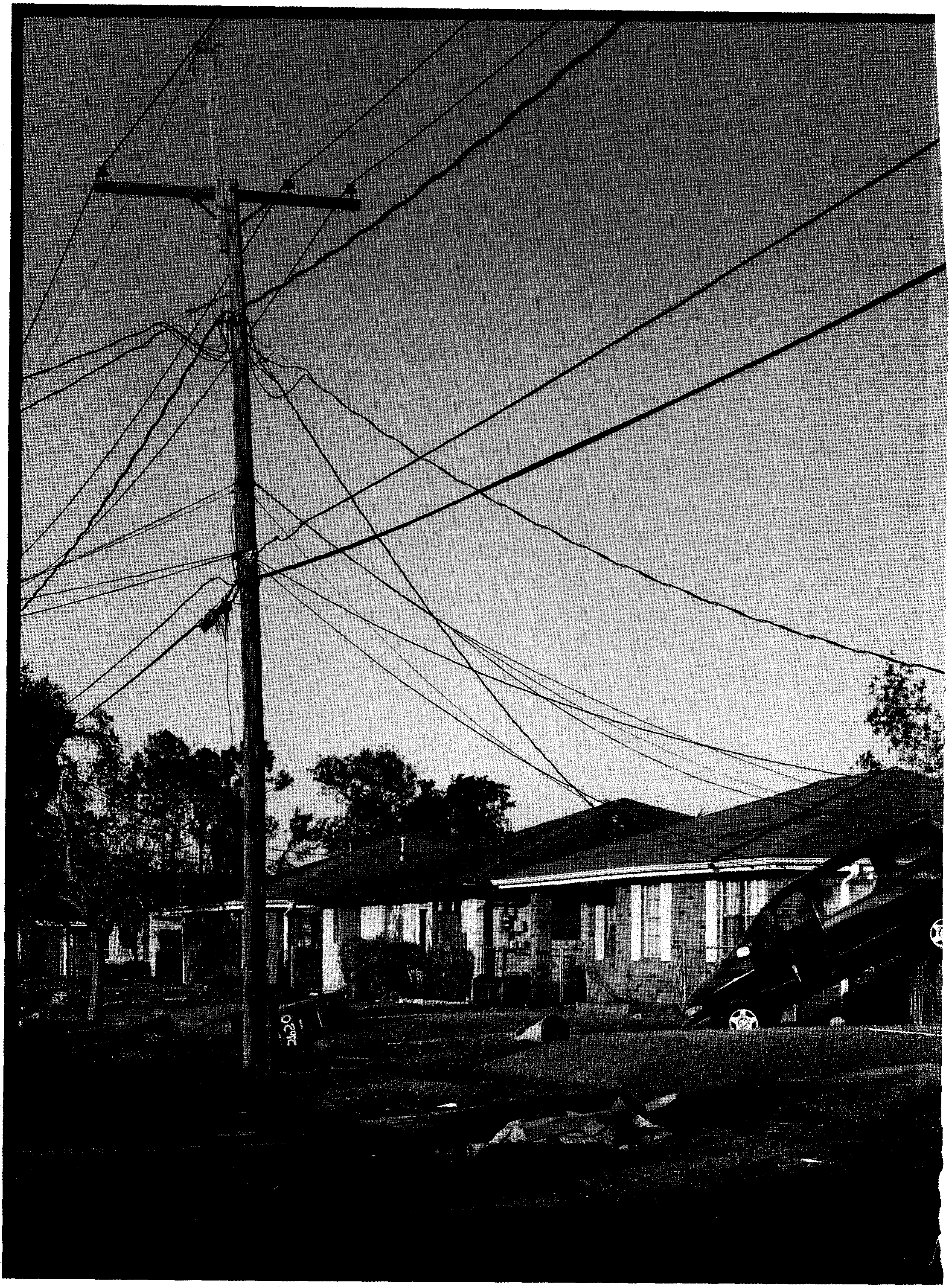
PORTFOLIO

THE WASTE LAND

When the waters receded.

BY ROBERT POLIDORI

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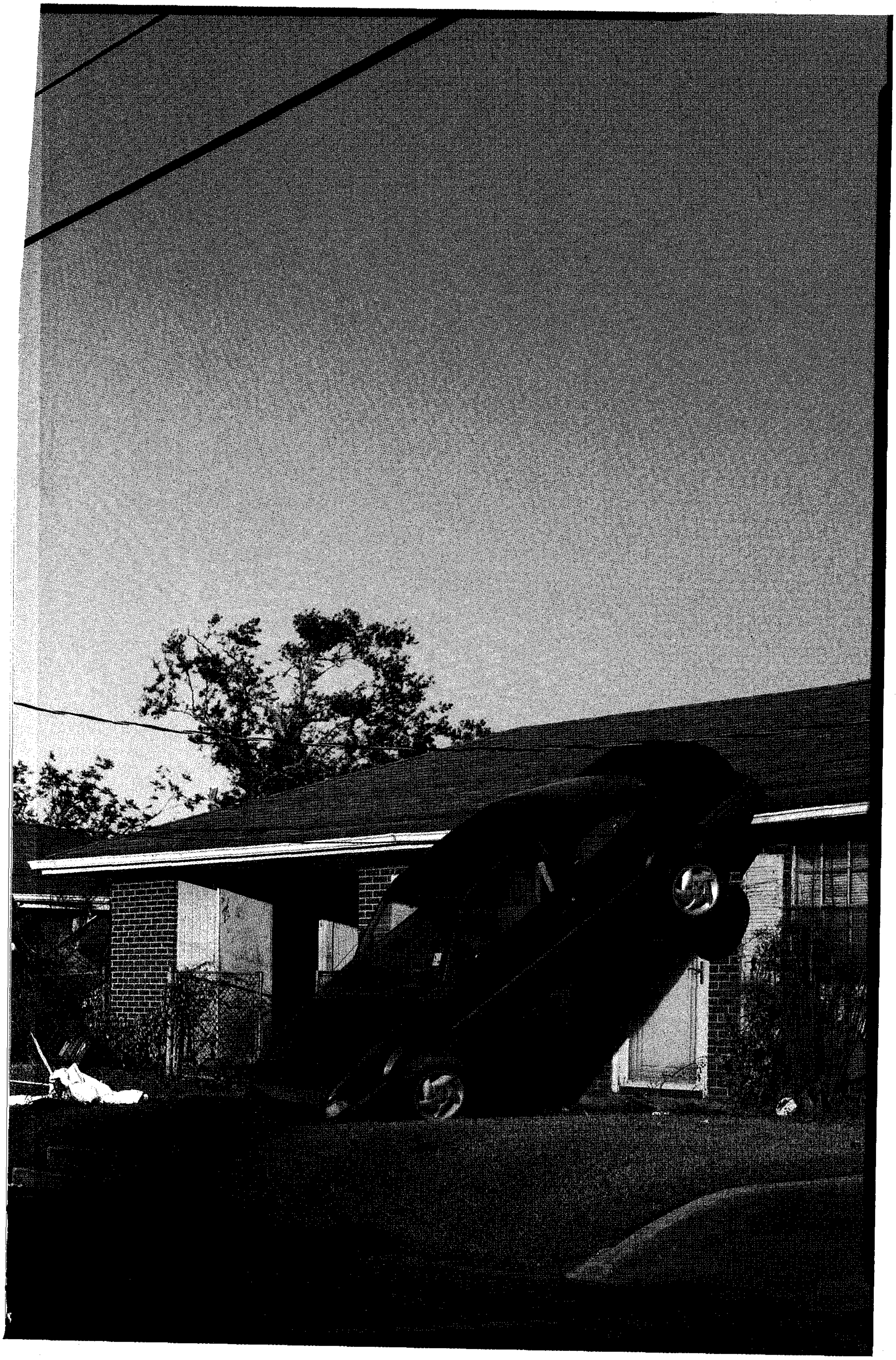
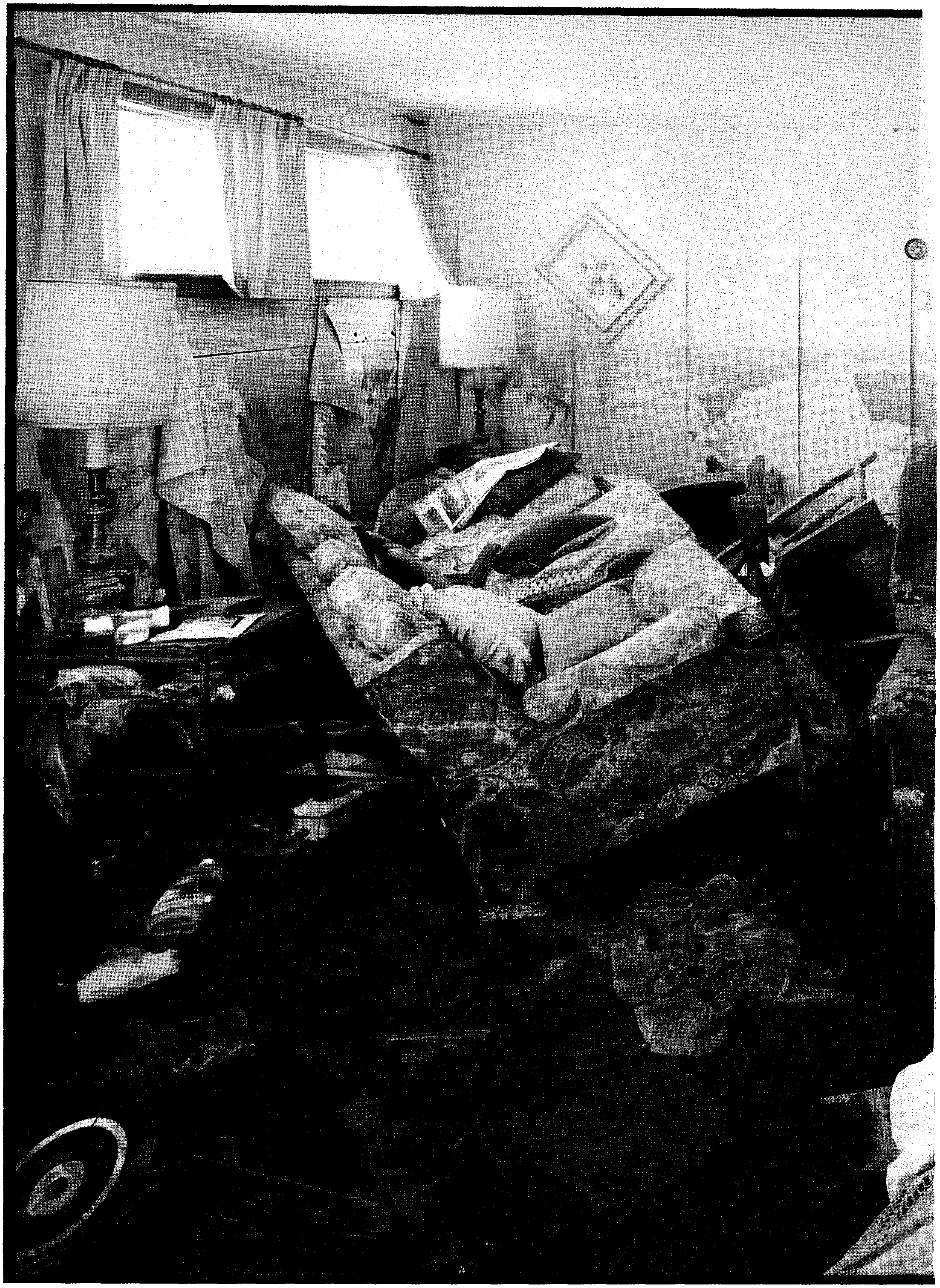
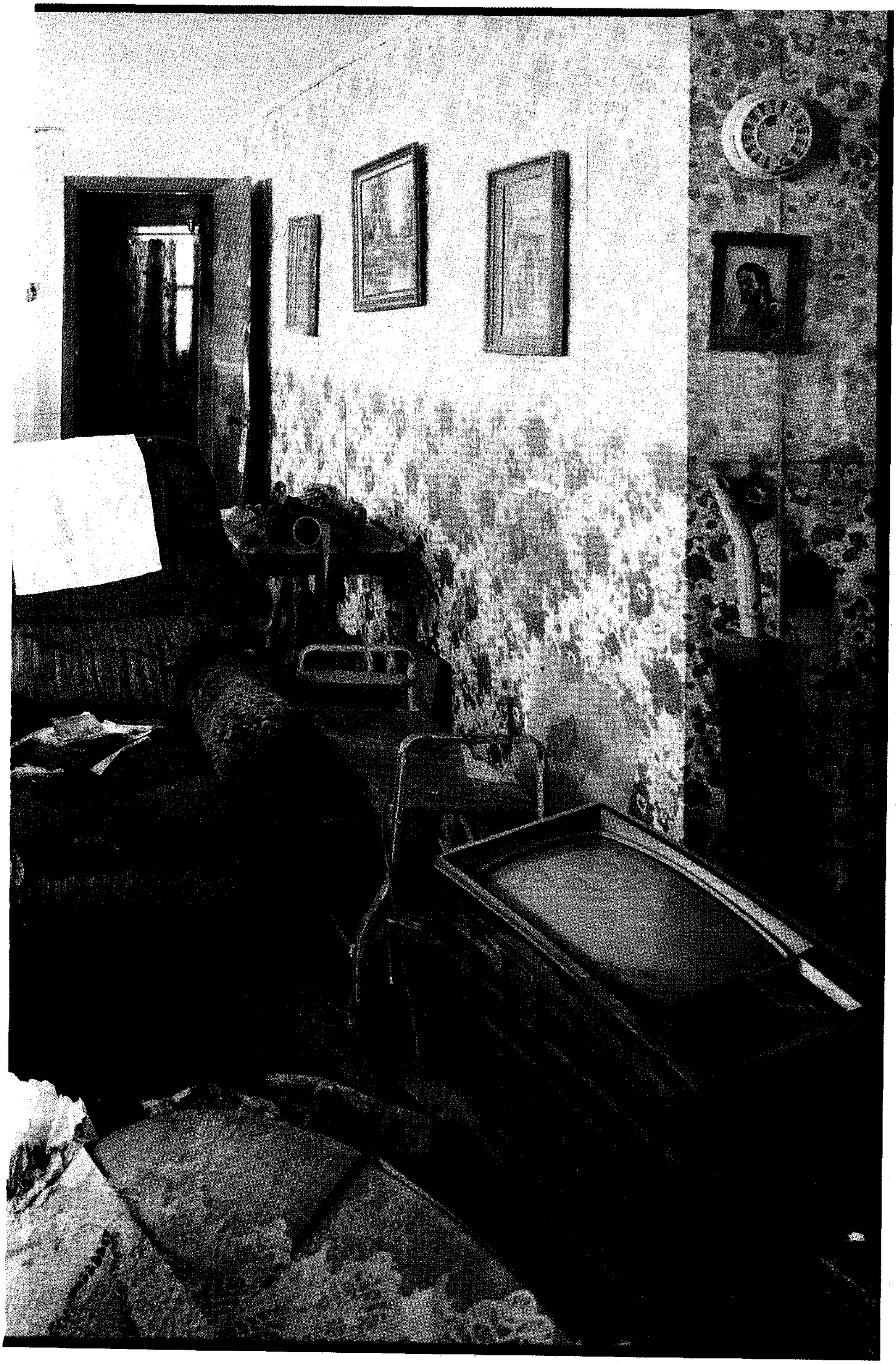
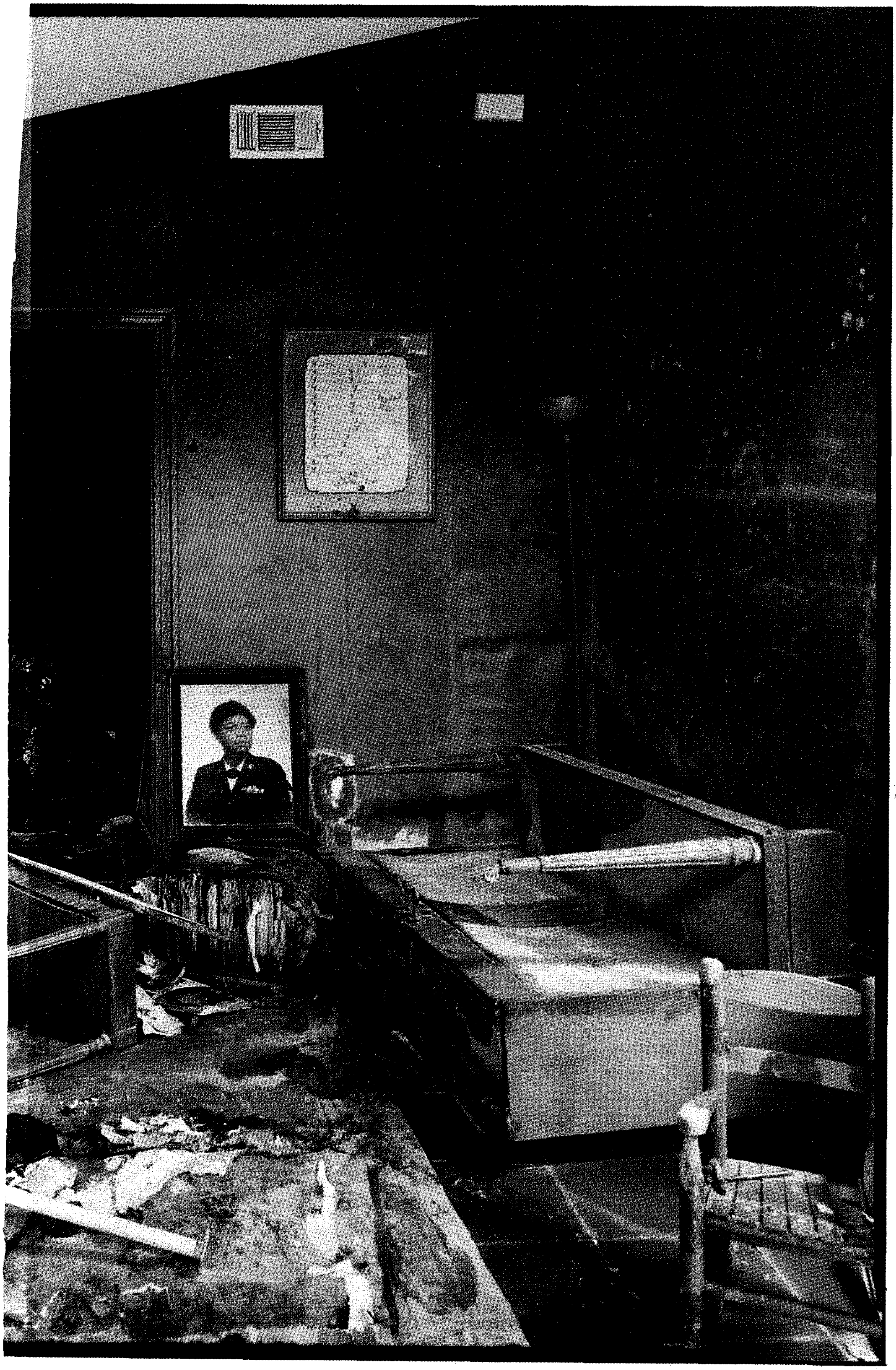
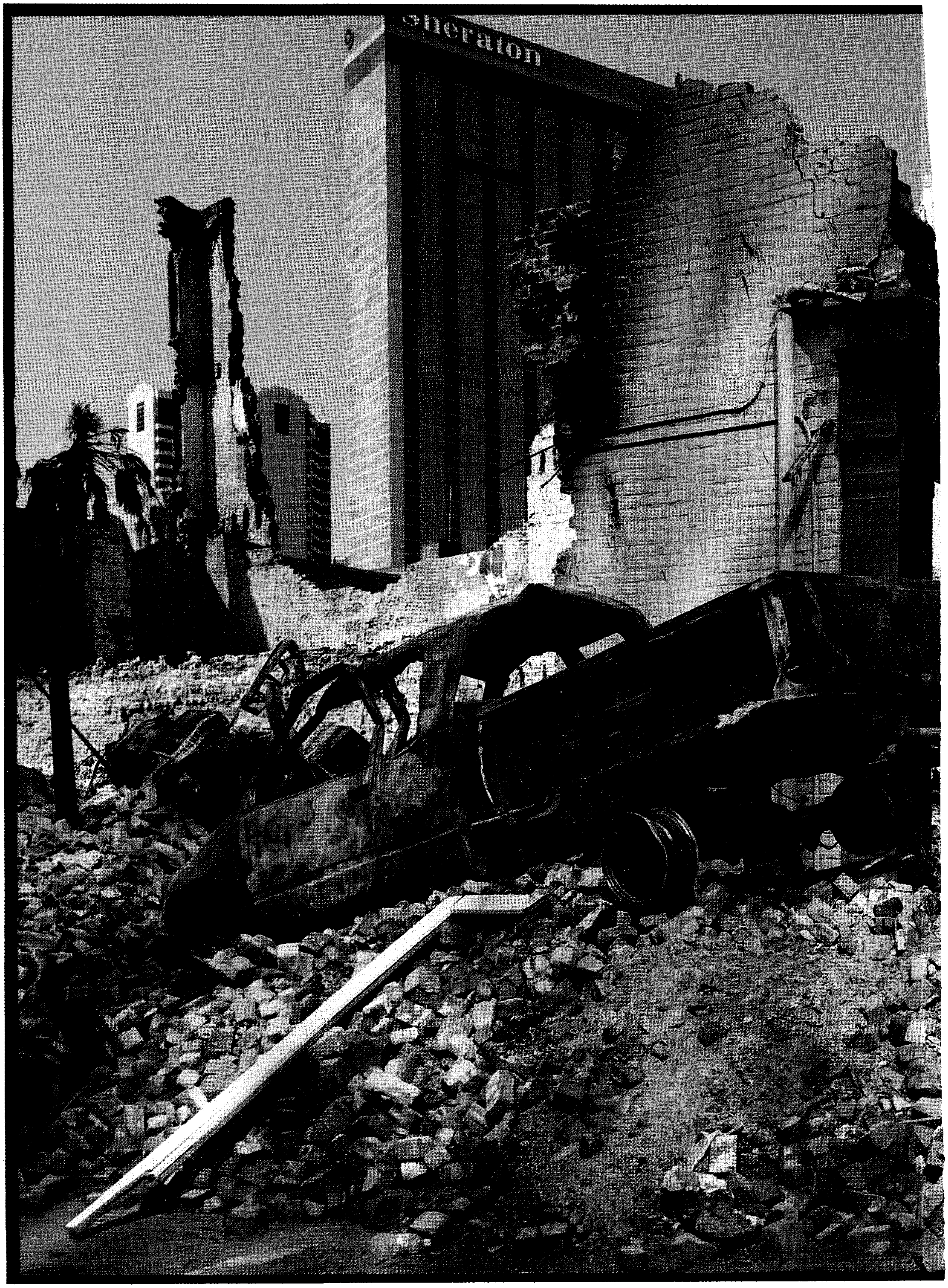
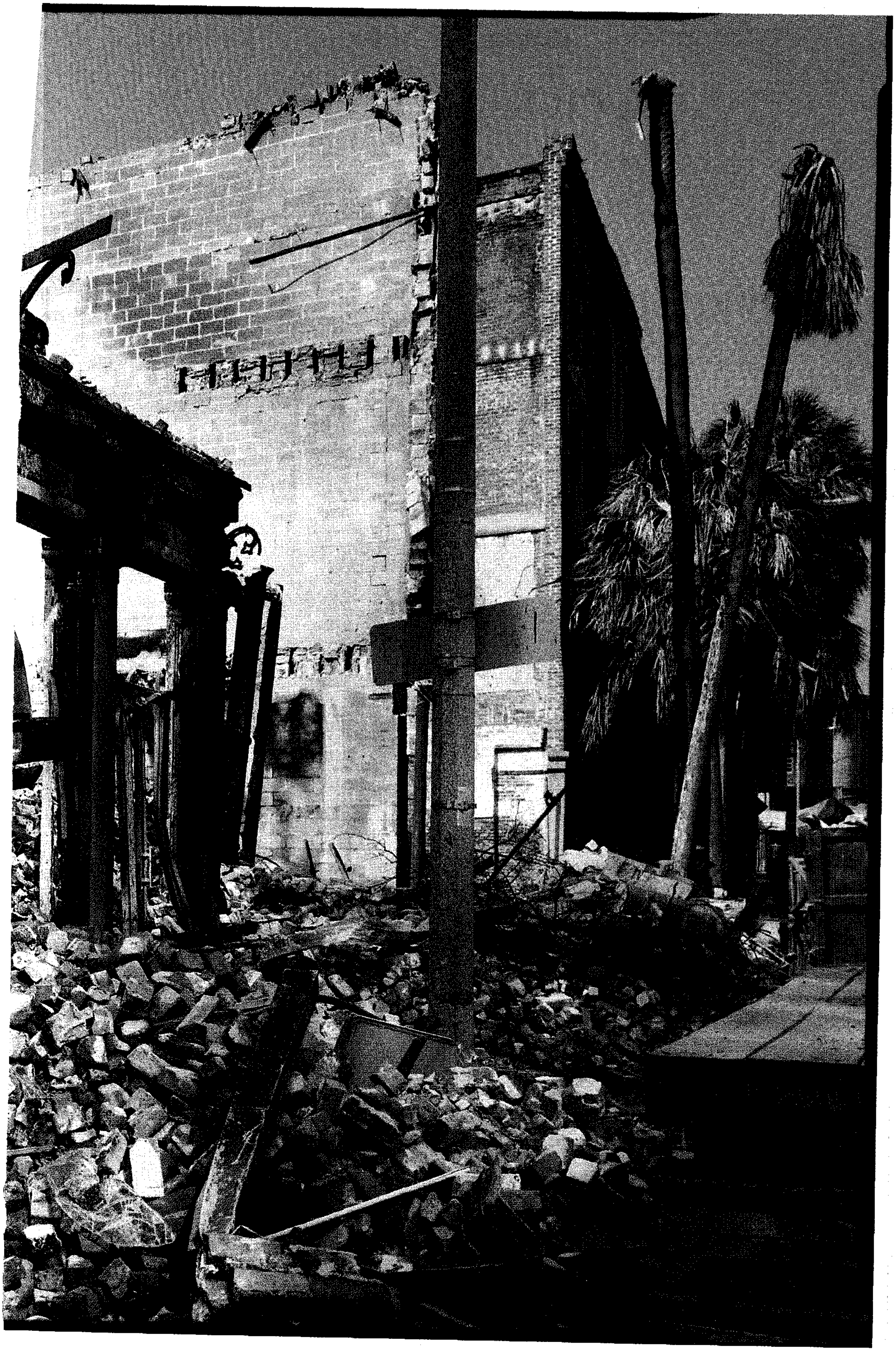








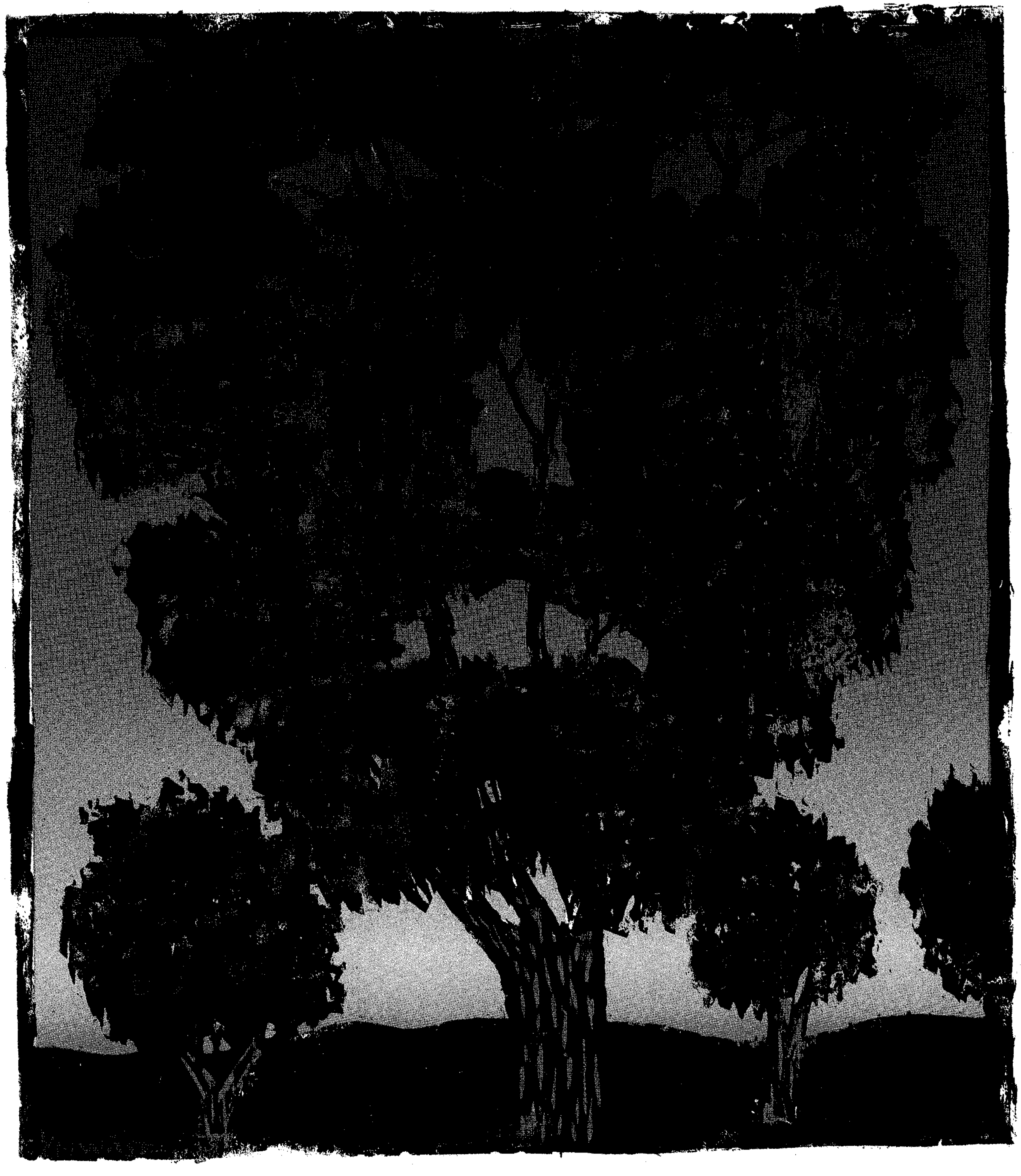

Sheraton



FICTION

THE CRYPTOZOOLOGIST

BY TONY EARLEY



Fieldin was under round-the-clock hospice care, and the jagged, liquid rasp of his breathing made it almost impossible for Rose to think about anything other than his vain search for oxygen. Unable to sleep, she put on his old down jacket and stepped onto the back porch, closing the door quietly behind her. It was about two-thirty in the morning, the world silvered with frost. The orchard glittered in the harsh light of a near-full moon. The gnarled old apple trees seemed on the verge of movement, as if she had caught them marching in formation toward App Mountain, whose black shoulders sloped suddenly upward just beyond the last row of trees. Had she been in a more peaceful mood, she might have fetched her sketchbook and made notes about the shadows for painting later. Instead, she stared at the mountain and wondered, as she often did, if Wayne Lee Cowan was still alive. Cowan had set off a bomb behind an abortion clinic in Birmingham the year before, killing eleven people. Then he'd parked his truck on a Forest Service fire road and disappeared into these mountains. Nobody, at least nobody who was talking, had laid eyes on him since.

Rose had lived on the farm for twenty-five years, and had stood on this porch and studied the orchard and the mountain countless times. But something about the view that night puzzled her, although the puzzlement didn't immediately register as such. She actually noticed that her brow was furrowed before she understood why. The moment that the unease she felt formed itself into a conscious thought—Wayne Lee—a figure separated itself from the shadow of one of the trees and strode quickly through the orchard toward the mountain. The figure was large and broad-shouldered, long-armed and stooped. It had some kind of silver stripe running the length of its back. Until it turned to look over its shoulder at her, Rose didn't fully appreciate that the figure not only wasn't Wayne Lee Cowan but wasn't even human.

When she ran back inside to tell the hospice volunteer sitting with Fieldin what she had seen, she found the woman removing the oxygen tube from Fieldin's nose. As Rose stood in the doorway and stared, thinking, Bigfoot, I just saw Bigfoot, she realized that the house had grown extraordinarily quiet. Fieldin had stopped breathing.

In 1975, when Rose turned twenty, married Fieldin Kohler, and moved to the farm, Tanner, the nearest town, had seemed to be as close as one could get to the end of the earth and still have access to a grocery store. That was why Fieldin had chosen it. He had been Rose's painting teacher at the small state college in Georgia onto whose campus she had wandered after graduating from high school. He was an emaciated praying mantis of a man who stuffed the legs of his paint-spattered chinos into knee-high fringed moccasins. He pulled his thinning gray hair back into a greasy ponytail, and wore vaguely piratical linen blouses whose sleeves billowed when he waved his arms. In class, he paced and chain-smoked while ranting about the soullessness of American art, and routinely offered beer and gas money to any student who would drive to Pennsylvania and *personally* shoot Andrew Wyeth.

Rose's father had been an Air Force intelligence officer who came home at night prohibited by federal law from talking about what he had done during the day. Her mother was a perfectly coiffed and made-up alcoholic with even more stringent standards of secrecy. Fieldin had been the first adult who ever actually told Rose anything. What he told her was that her breasts alone would have made Gauguin swear off Tahitian maidens forever, and that he would gladly cut off his right hand and never make art again if she would allow him to paint her nude just once. She went to bed with him during their first "sitting." His apartment was squalid. The only painting in the place was a self-portrait, done in the style of van Gogh, through which Fieldin had stuck his foot during a particularly virulent fit of self-loathing. On the ceiling above his bed he had meticulously copied out a long passage from Rimbaud, in French, and he became almost inconsolable when she told him that she didn't understand it. Later, when he went out to wander the streets alone, weeping with joy over how *ancient* her soul was, she got dressed and cleaned his apartment. By the time she realized that Fieldin had been a caricature when she met him, a by-the-book cutout of the lecherous college professor, they'd been married for years and his health was already beginning to fail. Once he became sick, holding him accountable for seducing the girl she'd been at eighteen—he'd been forty-three—struck her as an unnecessary act of retribution. That girl had found Fieldin Kohler terribly romantic.

She often thought with great tenderness about the administrators and counsellors and professors who had taken turns trying to talk her out of leaving school and marrying Fieldin. At the time, though, she had enjoyed the desperate quality of their attention. She had felt as if she were standing on a high, narrow ledge while they shouted at her not to jump. Until then, no one had ever cared whether she jumped or not, and she had been afraid that if she climbed down off the ledge they would stop noticing her at all. So she jumped. Fieldin stormed into the dean's office and quit in the middle of the fall term of her junior year, two days before the board of trustees was due to fire him. The morning they left for North Carolina, two campus police officers prevented him from entering her dormitory. He stood on the lawn outside her window, pretending to struggle with the cops, and screamed, "What have you fascists done with Rose?" The girls on her hallway silently watched her walk to the elevator. Everything she owned in the world fit into two suitcases and a duffelbag.

They moved into the farmhouse in November, during the last pale, generous days of a prolonged Indian summer. A few yellow leaves still clung to the upper branches of the apple trees, like decorations from a party she had missed, and rotting apples dangled from the twisted branches. At dusk, deer came down from the mountain and tottered around unsteadily on their hind legs, as if experimenting with a new mode of locomotion, eating all the apples they could reach. Late at night, possums climbed the trees and got drunk on the fermented fruit. From the bedroom she could hear them fighting and falling out of the trees, thudding onto the ground. The house was a disaster. No one had lived in it for years, and when Fieldin carried her across the threshold it had neither indoor plumbing nor electricity.

SEYMOUR CHWAST

Fieldin told her that the modern world was overrated and that they were going to live closer to the earth, the way the Cherokee had before the white man destroyed their way of life and made them forget who the Great Spirit had intended them to be.

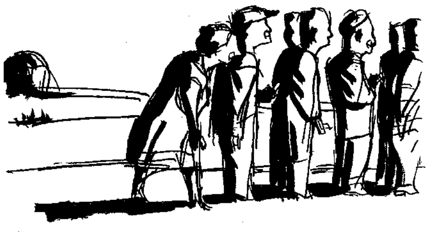
He lost patience with living close to the earth, however, as soon as the weather turned cold. The only heat in the place came from an ancient woodstove in the front room. The first frigid morning, Fieldin went up the mountain with an axe and came home less than an hour later, without any firewood, crying and cursing, blaming her for having got him into this mess. He dropped the axe at her feet and told her to go and cut wood if she was cold. By sundown she had managed to chop up and drag enough deadfall into the yard to get them through the night, blistering both her hands in the process. The next day, she took the credit card that her father had given her to use in case of emergency into Tanner and purchased a chainsaw. When her father received the bill, he cancelled the card.

Their nearest neighbors were Charlie and Plutina Shires, an older couple of indeterminate age—they might have been sixty or they might have been eighty—who farmed a small tobacco allotment the next hollow over. Rose had already smelled the wood smoke from their kitchen chimney, and noticed with admiration the carefully corded stacks of wood that Charlie had laid in beside his barn, so on the way home from town she stopped and introduced herself and asked him to show her how to work the chainsaw. Plutina insisted that she come in and eat a late breakfast of cold biscuits and molasses. Plutina's blue eyes were hugely magnified by the thick lenses of her glasses, and she sat and blinked, without saying anything, or missing anything, as Rose told her about Fieldin.

Charlie appeared in the woodlot the next morning, bearing his own saw and pulling a sled behind his tractor. He was a wizened little man who chewed on the stub of an unlit cigar, forcing his right eye into a perpetual squint. He never said three words when he could get by with two, and wouldn't waste two if he could make his point without speaking. That day, without drawing attention to the fact that he was teaching her, he showed Rose how to notch a tree to make it fall in the direction she wanted, how to keep the chain from binding and bucking, how to trim branches safely by cutting away from her legs, how to stack wood on the sled so that it wouldn't roll off. On the way back down the hollow, he taught her how to drive the tractor. Because she had been cutting wood in a pair of saddle oxfords, the only remotely warm shoes she owned, the next morning he showed up with a pair of tall green rubber boots that he said were too small for him. The boots were brand-new, but it was the mud he had rubbed on them, in an earnest attempt not to embarrass her, that made her cry.

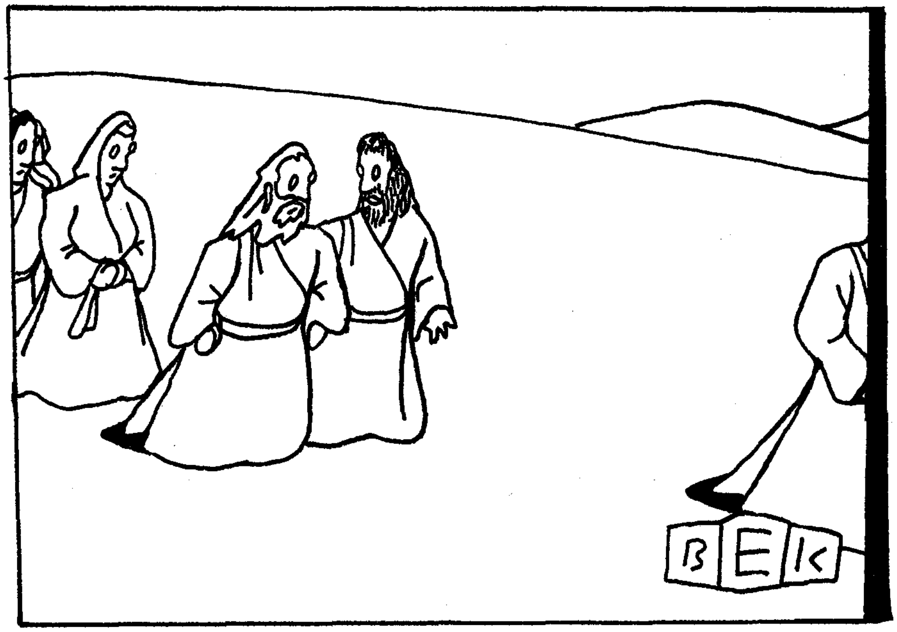
Charlie managed to keep an eye on their woodpile without seeming to, and took to parking his tractor in their woodlot and walking home over the ridge when he thought the pile was getting low. The only way to get the tractor to the woodlot was to drive it through their yard. He never looked at the house as he drove past, but if Rose was outside he greeted her by lifting his index finger from the steering wheel—which was about as ebullient as she ever knew him to be. If Fieldin was outside, Charlie just stared straight ahead. For his part, Fieldin pretended that the clattering tractor, as well as the old guy perched on top of it, was invisible. He spent his days that first winter drinking coffee at the diner and reading detective novels at the library. One Saturday morning in February, Charlie drove into the yard with a plow attached to the tractor and asked if she didn't reckon it was time to bust up the garden spot.

Rose knew that Fieldin's family had money. She just didn't know how much *he* had. Afraid that he would one day announce that they had run out of cash and couldn't buy food, she planted an immense garden, with the idea of selling the produce they didn't eat. She knew nothing about gardening, of course, so she learned how to do it by helping Plutina and Charlie. She planted the same vegetables they planted, though in larger quantities, and hoed and fertilized and sprayed and dusted exactly as they did. Miraculously, her garden flourished. When Fieldin had the house wired for electricity, she was able to convince him that it would be in his best interest to buy her the largest chest-model freezer offered in the Sears catalogue.



Spring inched in an uneven line up the mountain and didn't reach the ridgetop until the middle of May. When the weather warmed up for good, Fieldin set up his studio in the loft of the barn. While Rose worked in the garden, she could see him through the loft door, usually smoking and staring at a blank canvas propped on his easel. Occasionally, she'd catch him watching her. Cutting firewood and working in the garden had caused her shoulders to broaden and her waist to shrink. She developed the kind of muscles in her arms and legs that she had previously seen only on the boys who played football in high school. Her normally straight, mostly brown hair curled wildly and lightened in the sun. On the days when she knew that Charlie and Plutina had gone into town and wouldn't be dropping by, she stripped off her overalls—another gift from Charlie—and worked in the garden wearing just her underwear and the green rubber boots. The single painting of Fieldin's that she hung after he died was a gouache of her hoeing string beans. She occupied only a small portion on the upper right quadrant of the canvas, although the converging lines of the bean rows led the viewer's eye to the spot where she worked. Behind her, the mountain was dotted with the white of blooming dogwoods. In the painting, she wore only the green boots—artistic license, she supposed, and just like Fieldin—but her breasts were discreetly concealed behind her arm. She found the painting hidden in his studio when she went to clean it out.

It was during those first years that Fieldin adopted the Trail of Tears as his great subject. He wore a leather headband and, occasionally, a loincloth over his jeans. The town of Cherokee was less than an hour away, and he began driving there once or twice a week, sometimes staying overnight. He often came home in a foul mood because most of the Cherokee he encountered either wanted nothing to do with him or laughed at him outright. Their derision, however, never lessened his sincere, rather simplistic admiration of them as an oppressed yet spiritual people. He obsessively painted large, melodramatic canvases of weeping Cherokee slogging westward through the snow, watched from barren ridges by faceless white soldiers. The Indians were always marching toward a large stone pyramid that loomed in the distance. Because he couldn't find a gallery in Asheville that would show his paintings, Fieldin doggedly carted them to festivals and county fairs all over western North Carolina without ever managing to sell one—although he did, in a somewhat mysterious act of generosity, give one to Charlie and Plutina. Rose couldn't tell whether their neighbors actually liked the painting, but they hung it in their living room, where it shared the wall above the couch with a print, cut from a calendar, of Jesus praying in the moonlight while a storm raged behind him.



"Manna's good for the munchies."

Despite the various privations that came with living in a drafty, fieldmouse-infested, hundred-and-fifty-year-old house with a terminally self-absorbed man, Rose grew to love the farm as she had never before loved a place. (When she was a child, her family had moved from Air Force base to Air Force base, and the only place she had loved was her bed, the dark safe tent of its covers, assembled and disassembled in a series of shabby, interchangeable bedrooms.) Afraid that Fieldin would make fun of her, she secretly began painting small watercolors of the garden and the orchard, the mountain vigilant in the background. Eventually, she worked up enough courage to take a portfolio of her work to Three Weird Sisters, an art gallery in Tanner that was run by a trio of crewcut lesbians, transplanted from Milwaukee, whose specific domestic arrangements Rose could never figure out. Much to her surprise, not only did the gallery take her on as an artist but her paintings began to sell. Within a few years, they were selling as fast as she could paint them. Soon it seemed that every Florida Yankee who built a big house in the mountains had to have at least one painting by Rose Kohler. The only time Rose ever asked Fieldin what he thought of her art, he shrugged and told her that, while it didn't grab him by the balls, he liked it better than Andrew Wyeth's.

In the end, Fieldin quit painting and took a part-time job in the gallery. He called the weird sisters his harem, and they called him their boy toy. At least once a week, either he threatened to quit over the crappy art they chose to display or they threatened to fire him for condescending to the customers. Whatever disappointment he must have felt at giving up painting, whatever resentment he harbored over Rose's success, he kept to himself, even after the state art museum in Raleigh bought two of her paintings for its permanent collection.

By the time they'd been married for twenty years, Fieldin had somehow become an old man. He spent the last five years of his life angrily wheeling a small tank of oxygen around the gallery, bitching about his emphysema and Abstract Expressionism. Rose was never able to persuade him to give up smoking, but he promised the sisters, under threat of physical violence, that he would at least shut down the tank before he lit up. The slow process of dying never really softened Fieldin, the way it did people you saw in the movies, but it did sand down some of his rougher edges. Before he faded into unconsciousness, he told Rose that she was the only thing he had ever loved that he hadn't over time come to hate.

Climbing through her forties now, and living alone for the first time in her life, Rose wasn't sure which puzzled her more, the creature she had seen in the orchard the night Fieldin died or Fieldin himself. When Fieldin's will was read, she found that he had left her an investment portfolio—all blue-chip stocks and conservative mutual funds, worth just over six hundred thousand dollars—in addition to a small Renoir, which had belonged to his mother and father and was stored in a climate-controlled vault in Cleveland. She also learned that he wanted to be buried beside his parents, beneath a headstone bearing a Star of David. He'd never even told Rose that he was Jewish. About his history he'd said only that he was born in Vienna, to a long line of devout atheists; that when he was three years old his family had emigrated to Cleveland, where his father taught surgery at Case Western; and that his parents had kicked him out of the house shortly after he was kicked out of medical school. Although Fieldin's mother had still been alive and living in Florida when he and Rose married, he'd never taken Rose to Palm Beach to meet her, and the old woman had never travelled to the mountains.

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About her Bigfoot sighting, Rose learned that such creatures were routinely spotted in all of the Southeastern states—although the scientific authorities of course denied their existence—and the animals were commonly referred to as skunk apes, because of the broad white or silver vertical stripe on their backs and their notoriously disagreeable odor. Southern skunk apes were generally known to be smaller, but meaner, than their Pacific Northwest counterparts. Rose gathered all this information from the Internet, from a Web site posted by a group calling itself the Cryptozoological Study Association (C.S.A.), which was devoted to documenting the existence of heretofore undiscovered primates south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Studying these reports gave Rose something to think about besides Fieldin, at whom she unexpectedly found herself violently angry. Late at night—when she just wanted to *kill* Fieldin, and was stymied by the fact that he was already dead—she gratefully followed the C.S.A. links to cryptozoological Web sites all over the world. (The Norwegian site had particularly stunning photographs of fjords, although she couldn't understand the text; the Albanian Web site had pictures of naked women.) When she gave the C.S.A. a thousand dollars of Fieldin's money, she received an effusive thank-you letter, spattered with exclamation marks, naming her an honorary cryptozoologist.

Most days, she thought that the skunk ape she'd seen in the orchard had been a gentle being, sent by a benevolent god to lead Fieldin to the other side, but some days she couldn't help thinking that its mission had been more malign, perhaps even evil. Either way, it seemed obvious to her that, for whatever reason, that particular skunk ape, on that particular date, had come for Fieldin. Late one night, she publicly weighed in on the debate between the small but harshly vocal cryptozoological faction who thought that in order to convincingly document the existence of an undiscovered species of primate a specimen would have to be killed and the larger but less combative contingent who insisted that the shy, gentle creatures must be protected at all costs, by hastily mailing a somewhat—she realized later—histrionic letter to the editor of the local paper, imploring area hunters to let the skunk apes of the North Carolina mountains live in peace. The only noticeable effect that her letter seemed to have on the community, however, was to lead carloads of drunken teen-agers to pull into her yard at all hours, beat on their chests, and make monkey noises. She couldn't decide if the kid wearing a gorilla mask who peered in her kitchen window one night was made more or less frightening by his fluorescent-orange University of Tennessee sweatshirt. Despite the awful nature of Wayne Lee Cowan's crime—and Rose had never heard anybody, not even the other Cowans, suggest that Wayne Lee *hadn't* blown up that abortion clinic—she eventually found herself feeling a little grateful to him for absorbing, with his conspicuous absence, much of the community scrutiny and derision that might otherwise have been aimed at her.

Within days of Wayne Lee's disappearance, more than two hundred state and federal agents had descended on Tanner. They'd rented every motel room in a two-county area and made it virtually impossible to get a table at the Waffle House. An unusually quiet black helicopter circled the mountains day and night, dangling on the end of a cable extended from its belly some top-secret medallion of electronic equipment shaped like an upside-down mushroom. Because the sheer number of agents stomping or slinking through the woods made deer hunting a pointless exercise and growing marijuana even more hazardous than usual, and because a large percentage of the agents seemed to possess neither a baseline level of politeness nor a modicum of respect for personal property rights, the F.B.I. soon lost favor with a significant portion of the local population—most of whose Scotch-Irish ancestors had moved to the mountains to escape some type of authority in the first place. Following the detention—by a SWAT team whose members wore ninja masks—of seven-year-old Brian Lee McInerny for aiming a laser pointer at the helicopter, stickers bearing the legend "Run, Wayne Lee, Run!" appeared on telephone poles and stop signs all over town. Not even the million-dollar re-ward the government offered for information leading to Cowan's arrest noticeably softened public sentiment. And even more troubling than the agents were the television crews, who, once it became obvious that Wayne Lee wasn't going to be captured anytime soon, desperately began filing one-dimensional "local color" pieces. Rose respectfully turned down interview requests from four national news organizations regarding her single, probably menopausal foray into advocacy for the protection of Appalachian skunk apes. Not one of the producers who contacted her even mentioned her paintings.

As time passed, and Wayne Lee Cowan remained at large, the television people and the majority of the cops left Tanner for what they probably considered civilization. Eventually, only a skeleton crew of F.B.I. agents remained encamped on the far end of the second floor of the Best Western. Before he became an abortion-clinic bomber, Wayne Lee had worked for Rose and Fieldin two or three times as a sullen and not particularly industrious day laborer, which had led to their being interviewed in the early days of the search by an agent whose name she had forgotten. But she hadn't spoken to anyone in the F.B.I. for almost four years when she was visited by D'Abruzzio, the new Special Agent in Charge.

His first name was Richard, but shortly after his arrival he had made the mistake of telling one of the old guys in front of the barbershop to call him Dick. Now he went by D'Abruzzio only, or Special Agent in Charge D'Abruzzio when he was pissed off. Rose had noticed him in the Waffle House and found herself sneaking looks at him. He had the knobby biceps of a man who lifted weights for his health and not for his appearance, and he unself-consciously sported the type of virile, dark, vaguely ethnic mustache that most Southern men either wouldn't or couldn't grow. Late one fall afternoon, he materialized on her front porch, tapping gently at the screen door; he must have parked somewhere away from her house, an act she found both smart and considerate. They drank hot spiced cider, sitting at the edge of the orchard while the air cooled around them. They watched the hollows blacken as the shadows pushed the sunlight farther and farther up the side of the mountain. Rose told D'Abruzzio what she had told the other agent: that although Wayne Lee had worked for her, she couldn't honestly say that she knew him, or anything about him.

D'Abruzzio nodded and looked away. He seemed to be thinking about something else. "I read your letter," he said.

Rose felt her cheeks go hot. "Oh my," she said. "Why on earth are you reading three-year-old newspapers?"

"I like to know where I am," D'Abruzzio said.

Good answer, Rose thought. "Do you think I'm crazy?" she asked.

D'Abruzzio pursed his lips and stared toward the mountain. "No," he said finally. "I don't think so."

"Do you believe in Bigfoot?"

"No comment," he said.

"What's that thing that looks like a mushroom that hangs underneath the black helicopter?"

D'Abruzzio smiled at her. "What black helicopter?"

She blushed again. "You know what black helicopter."

"Ah," he said. "*That* black helicopter. Well, that thing hanging underneath it that looks like a mushroom? I can't tell you what that is."

"I see," Rose said. "A secret. But, hypothetically speaking, could such a thing be used to find a skunk ape? Or, if such a thing was looking for something else, and accidentally found a skunk ape, would you be able to tell anybody?"

"I'll make a deal with you," D'Abruzzio said. "I'll tell you if I see a skunk ape, if you tell me if you see Wayne Lee Cowan."

Rose wondered where D'Abruzzio had parked his car, and if anyone had seen it. "O.K.," she said finally. "You've got a deal."

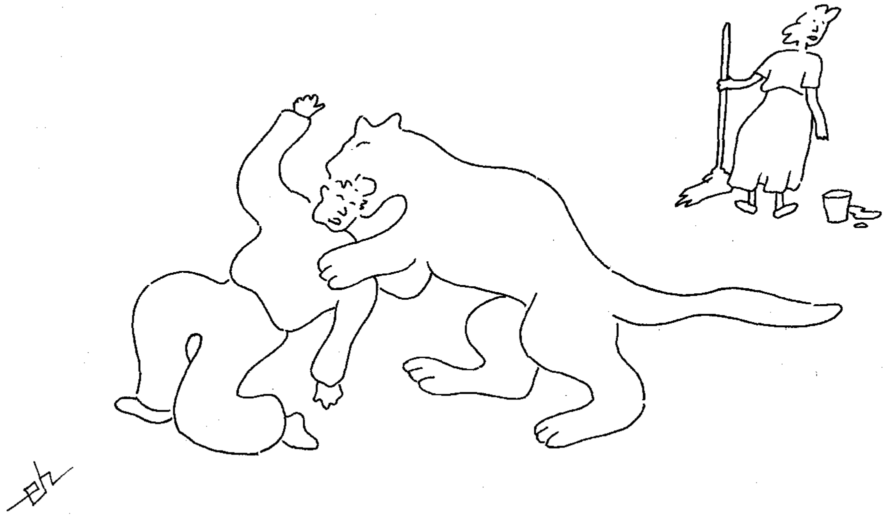
D'Abruzzio stood up and stretched. "App Mountain," he said. "Do you know where the name comes from?"

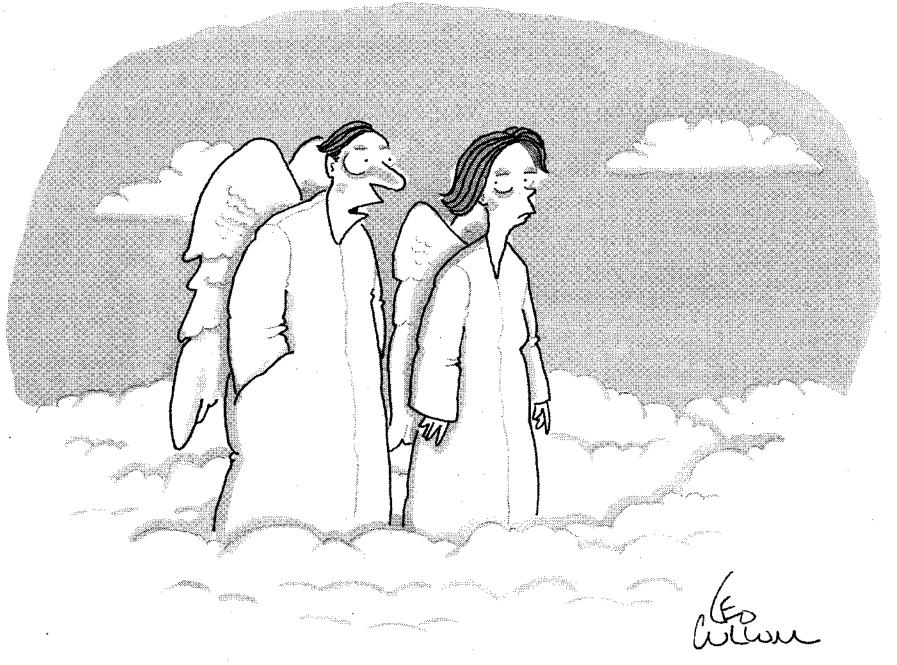
Rose shrugged. "I always assumed it was short for 'Appalachian.' "

"I wonder," D'Abruzzio said. "Maybe the guy who named it just didn't know how to spell 'Ape.' "

Rose stopped at the foot of Plutina's driveway and stared sadly at her neighbor's house. It was tucked far back up the hollow on a knob that Charlie had deemed too rocky to plant. A single light burned in the living room, and a thin gauze of wood smoke hung immobile above the kitchen chimney in the still, dusky air. Charlie had died two months earlier, and Rose knew from personal experience that Plutina was just now crossing over into what would be the darkest days of her widowhood. The officious stream of Sunday-school classes and bereavement committees bearing casseroles and Jell-O molds would have begun to dry up, if it hadn't already, and the other visitors would have returned to their normal pattern of stopping by only when it suited them, if they came at all.

Plutina opened the front door and blinked up at Rose through the screen. Her eyes, magnified as always by her glasses, looked even bigger, though everything else about her seemed to have


"Oh, for goodness' sake—why don't you boys go out and shoot some hoops?"



"I just feel we'd know more people in Hell."

• •

grown smaller in the last two months.

"Well, Rose," she said. "You might as well come on in."

In the living room, she perched in the middle of the couch, her feet barely brushing the floor, while Rose settled uncomfortably into Charlie's recliner. Its cloth upholstery reeked so strongly of cigars that it might as well have been haunted. Above Plutina, Fieldin's mournful Cherokee marched toward one of the mysterious pyramids he had dropped over and over again, without explanation, into Oklahoma.

"Did that F.B.I. man go back to town?" Plutina asked.

Rose grinned. "How did you know he was over at my place?"

"He ain't as smart as he thinks he is, that's how. None of 'em are."

"He wanted to know what I knew about Wayne Lee."

"What'd you tell him?"

"I told him I didn't know anything."

"Good," Plutina said sharply. "That's the right answer."

"I didn't *ask* him to come to my house," Rose said.

"I know you didn't ask him, but he ain't doing you any favors by coming, either. You ought to tell him that."

"I doubt anybody saw him."

"*I* saw him, and I'm half blind."

"Did he talk to you?"

"Not today."

"Do you think Wayne Lee's still alive?"

"I honestly don't know," Plutina said. "I'm just sad it'll be turning off cold before long. I hate to think about that boy living out on that mountain in the wintertime." Her shoulders started to shake. She reached into the pocket of her sweater and pulled out a well-used tissue, which she dabbed at the corners of her eyes. "I just hope Charlie's warm."

"Oh, honey," Rose said. "Don't cry."

"His feet are bad to get cold. I used to heat him up a pan of water before we went to bed."

"I'm sure Charlie's feet are fine."

"I don't know what's wrong with me," Plutina said.

"You just miss Charlie, that's all. It'll get better."

"I don't want it to get better. I want it to get over. I've been living up in this holler a long time."

Rose opened her mouth and waited, but no wise words of consolation spilled out.

"I wasn't but seventeen years old when Charlie brought me up in here," Plutina said. "Took me away from my people, but that's the way it's always been when a girl gets married. You know about that. My people are all dead now, anyway. We come from over by Sylva. My daddy was a town man. He could read good and always knew what time it was. He worked on the railroad."

"Sylva," Rose said.

"Me and Charlie never could have babies. Did you know that?"

Rose shook her head.

"I had one, but it was born dead."

"Plutina, I'm sorry."

"After the doctor left, Charlie took it in an old sheet and buried it up on the mountain somewhere. That's the way people did things back then, but it don't seem right to me when I think about it now. All these years I've thought that baby must be wandering around up there, looking for somebody to take care of it. Charlie never even told me where it was. I couldn't go find it if I needed to."

She took off her glasses and fished another tissue out of her pocket.

"Well, I'm sure Charlie didn't mean anything by it," Rose said.

Plutina glared up at Rose, her eyes a concentrated blue, smaller and harder than Rose had ever seen them. "You don't know *what* Charlie meant."

Rose stood reflexively. In the foreground of Fieldin's painting, a young Cherokee woman looked at her beseechingly, as if begging her to do something. Rose pointed at the painting. "You're right," she said. "I never understood what Fieldin meant, either. That pyramid."

Plutina blew her nose loudly, but didn't look over her shoulder. "It's a religious picture," she said. "The people are being led into bondage."

Late that night, Rose stood at her bedroom mirror and absent-mindedly brushed her hair. Fieldin had been dead five years, and she had resolved some time ago not to cry about him anymore. Enough was enough, after all; he hadn't been that nice. But Plutina's spot-on interpretation of his work had simply broken her heart. Of course his Cherokee paintings had been religious pictures. She had just been too literal-minded and, later, too lost in her own work—her popular, sentimental, representational *watercolors*—to figure it out. And Fieldin had been too gracious or arrogant or both to explain it to her, or to anyone else. She could not imagine how lonely he must have felt, driving home from some small-town crafts fair, the car packed with the same canvases he'd set off with that morning. He'd tried, for years and years, to say something that was important to him, and she, of all people, had never even *heard* the story he was trying to tell, much less understood it. She had never for a minute known who he was. If she had only been able to piece the clues together, perhaps she could have helped him. Fieldin had told her that his only memory of Vienna was of sitting in a sidewalk café, watching a small cyclone of dead leaves swirl down the street. He had thought they were birds.

"Oh, damn it, Fieldin," she said. "Why didn't you just say something?"

In the mirror, Rose looked past her shoulder to the reflection of the bed they had shared, and willed Fieldin to appear in it. He didn't show, of course—that, at least, was just like him—and the Fieldin she wound up imagining had that awful oxygen tube stuck in his nose. She closed her eyes and listened, but he had stopped breathing all over again. She dropped her brush on the dresser and walked quickly through the house to the back door, where she cupped her hands against the cool glass of the window and looked out at the orchard. The light was warm, golden—the gentle light of the approaching harvest moon—but the old trees, stooped again with a harvest of hard, bitter heirloom apples that nobody wanted, looked exhausted by the weight they carried. She found herself staring intently, for no reason she could think of, at the narrow lane of grass between two trees at the far end of the orchard. As she stared, a bulky dark figure stepped out from behind one of the trees and crossed the lane, turning its head toward the house in the instant it took to step across.

Afraid that the creature would hear her open the back door, Rose ran through the house on tiptoe, stopping briefly at the hat rack in the hallway, where she jerked out of her bag the small digital camera she carried with her in case she saw something she wanted to paint. She gently opened the front door and ran down the steps and around the side of the house. She crossed the back yard, keeping the nearest tree between her and the spot where she'd seen the figure, and when she reached the orchard she ran up the lane as quickly and quietly as possible. The skunk ape had come for Fieldin five years ago, she thought, and now Fieldin had sent it back. She would take a picture of it and post it on the Internet. She would be a world-famous cryptozoologist. She would get the entire mountain declared a skunk-ape preserve. She would be the goddam *Jane Goodall* of skunk-ape studies.

She stopped on the downhill side of the tree behind which the figure had disappeared, her thrashing heart wildly alive in her chest, the dewy grass cold on her feet. She peered into the maze of apple-laden limbs and through a narrow opening saw in silhouette the figure's black shoulder and great, shaggy head. It was standing absolutely still. She could just detect a musky, unpleasant, urine-tinged odor. Maybe, she thought for the first time, she would have to go with it. Maybe when the skunk apes came you just had to go. She would follow it up the mountain. She would find Fieldin and kiss him on the mouth and say, *Fieldin, you dead bastard. Your paintings, I get them now. I'm sorry.* She would be a ghost, if she had to. She would walk the darkest hollows on the coldest nights, singing Scotch-Irish lullabies to Plutina's lost baby. She and Charlie would plant gardens in the forest for the deer to eat. She would paint pictures of her neighbors' children, and leave them tacked to the trees in their yards. And, occasionally, she would scare the hell out of teen-age boys wearing U.T. sweatshirts, just for fun.

Through the tree, she made out the almost inaudible sound of breathing, shallow and fast like her own. The poor thing was as excited and scared as she was. In the distance she heard the muffled, percussive *whup whup whup whup* of D'Abruzzio's black helicopter. Too late, Special Agent in Charge, she thought, you with your beautiful mustache. She was ready now. It was time to go to the other side. She wanted to know everything. She looked down, plotting her next step, and on the ground saw two five-gallon plastic buckets, half-filled with apples. ♦

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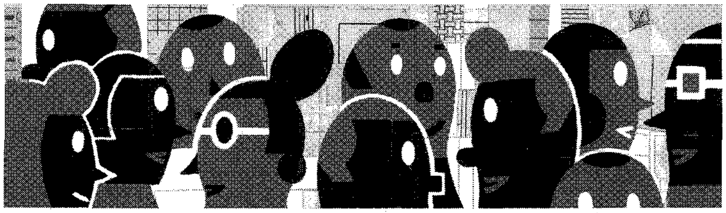


BOOKS

A FAMOUS MAN

The collected works of James Agee.

BY DAVID DENBY

In July of 1936, James Agee, a writer for *Fortune* and an avid Greenwich Village partygoer, drinker, and talker, found himself in the house of a taciturn Alabama family he called the Gudgers. Henry Luce's business magazine was then in its early, socially concerned phase, and Agee, along with the photographer Walker Evans, had been sent to the South to investigate the situation of tenant cotton farmers—the sort of subject that was common for *Fortune* during the Depression. As Agee reconstructed the moment afterward, in the report that became not a magazine article but a daunting four-hundred-page prose epic, "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men" (with Evans's extraordinary photographs preceding the text), he was writing late on a summer night, by the light of a coal-oil lamp, in a front bedroom vacated for his use, while the seven members of the Gudger family were asleep in the next room. He was feeling calm—confident of his ability, aided by the "dry, silent, and famished" little flame, to take stock of the life around him. He hadn't always felt that way. From the beginning, he had denigrated the reporting project as a fraud and a betrayal. In the book's first pages, a furious self-inquiry builds up. Agee was not wealthy, but he was privileged, an emissary from a powerful organization and therefore authorized to "pry intimately into the lives of an undefended and appallingly damaged group of human beings." For what purpose did he pry? For money? For glory? In the name of "honest journalism"? After all, he wasn't going to do the tenant farmers any good. A literary man in love with Joyce, Faulkner, and Céline, he had no intention of writing the kind of responsible report, with statistics and graphs, that might have spurred legislative action. Nor was he a Marxist, hoping to inflame protest meetings and rallies. The moral quandary of liberal journalism has never been stated with greater clarity or anguish.

Agee and Evans settled on two more families, whom Agee called the Rickettses and the Woodses, and worked and stayed with them for three weeks. The families owned virtually nothing—at best, a couple of mules and a few farming implements—and they were required to give their landlords half of their crops and a quarter or more of the earnings from their own half. They lived without electricity or running water. Having worked since they were children, they were hardened and shrewd, perhaps, but unlettered and inarticulate. For Agee, however, the point was not that these families suffered from atrocious social conditions. The point was that they existed. In an age concerned largely with the "masses," Agee was impressed by the notion that other human beings idiosyncratically are what they are, in every ornery fibre. Flesh, bone, desire, consciousness—in almost every way, the farmers were different from him and therefore obdurate in their singleness and as capable of pleasure and misery as he. A young couple sitting on a porch and staring at Agee had in their eyes "so quiet and ultimate a quality of hatred, and contempt, and anger, toward every creature in existence beyond themselves, and toward the damages they sustained, as shone scarcely short of a state of beatitude." Agee, born an Episcopalian, and deeply religious as a child, was no longer an orthodox believer. But he had a consciousness of the sacred in people and in ordinary objects that believers associate with God's immanence. He loved, and took literally, Blake's proclamation "Everything that lives is holy."

It's an idea that, as a practical matter, most of us would find hard to sustain. But it imposed devastating, almost comically savage responsibilities on this inordinately ambitious young man (he was twenty-six at the time). Agee wanted to make a connection with the families, and to be liked by them in return, but he didn't want to swamp the farmers with sympathy—their pride wouldn't endure it. Try as he might, he could not resolve the disparity between the sullenness of his subjects and his own ravenous and unending sensibility. All that he could do was record. In the room where the Gudgers slept, there was:

> George's red body, already a little squat with the burden of thirty years, knotted like oakwood, in its clean white cotton summer union suit that it sleeps in; and his wife's beside him, Annie Mae's, slender, and sharpened through with bone that ten years past must have had such beauty, and is now veined at the breast, and the skin of the breast translucent, delicately shriveled, and blue . . . and the tough little body of Junior, hardskinned and gritty, the feet crusted with sores; and the milky and strengthless littler body of Burt whose veins are so bright in his temples.

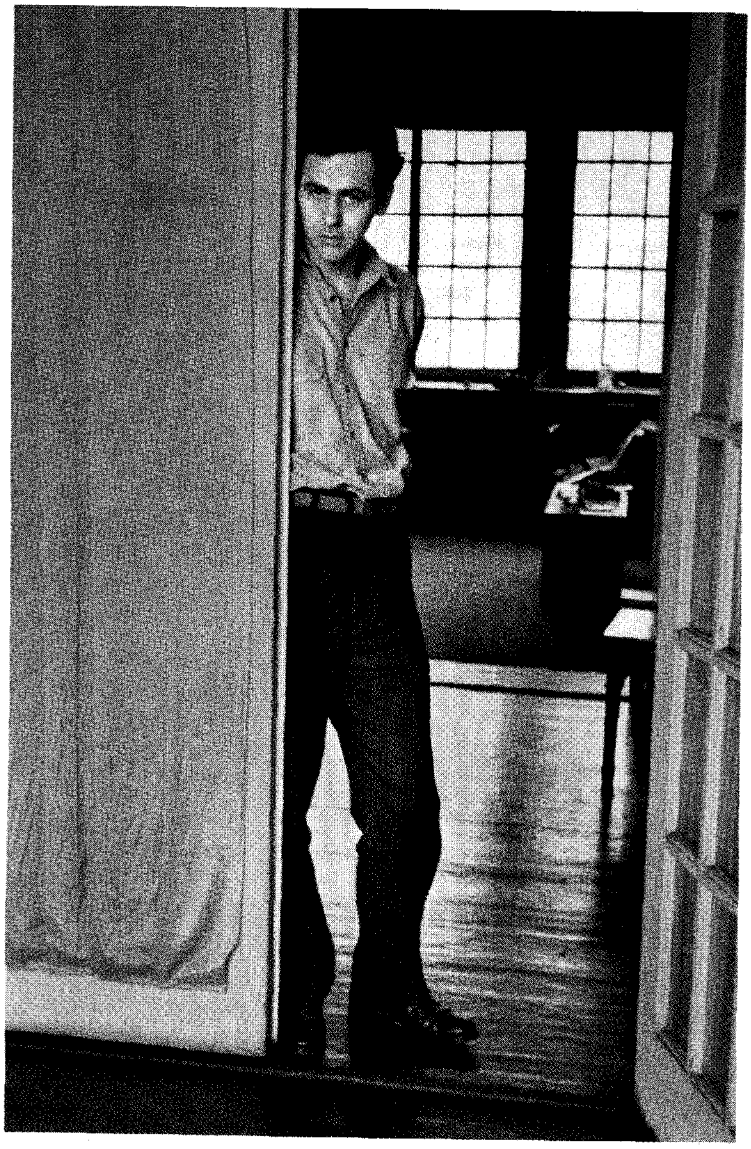
Of the Gudger house itself, he noted that, in daylight, "each texture in the wood, like those of bone, is distinct in the eye as a razor: each nail-head is distinct: each seam and split; and each slight warping; each random knot and knot-hole." He went on:

> The house is rudimentary as a child's drawing, and of a bareness, cleanness, and sobriety which only Doric architecture, so far as I know, can hope to approach: this exact symmetry is sprung silently and subtly,

> here and there, one corner of the house a little off vertical, a course of weather-boarding failing the horizontal between parallels, a window frame not quite square, by lack of skill and by weight and weakness of timber and time; and these slight failures, their tensions sprung against centers and opposals of such rigid and earnest exactitude, set up intensities of relationship far more powerful than full symmetry, or studied dissymmetry, or use of relief or ornament, can ever be.

Then, burrowing under the house, he finds, among many other things, "the white tin eyelet of a summer shoe; and thinly scattered, the desiccated and the still soft excrement of hens."

The families were certainly seen—the re-creation of their furniture, their clothes, food, work, and speech, their smells, their scraps and broken belongings, their momentary joy when they start picking the cotton (until the pain sets in), their outlying woods and springs goes on for pages. In this prose, with its tangled and then flowing lyricism, its indefatigable enumerations and Biblical amplifications, one can hear the influence of Whitman's exultant catalogues and Joyce's vibrant harmonies of daily life. In journalism, however, there is no earlier version of it that I'm aware of, and no later equivalent, either—not until you get to Mailer's polyphonic re-creation of the hippie-activist battalions in the 1967 "Armies of the Night." In the Library of America's recent two-volume selection of Agee's writing ($35 and $40), edited by Michael Sragow, the film critic of the Baltimore *Sun*, "Famous Men" stands out as Agee's major achievement, towering over the justly beloved film criticism and the fine, posthumously published novel "A Death in the Family." Yet "Famous Men" is no easier to read now than it was sixty-five years ago. (It was finally published in 1941, and sold six hundred copies.) At first glance, certainly, it smacks of such period artifacts as documentary hymns to rural electrification and W.P.A. canvases of hammer-swinging workers—the oatmeal-bland left sentimentality that has now fallen into the category of historical kitsch. Confusingly organized, ill-mannered, at times grandiloquent and stargazingly wide-eyed, it's one of those books which many people read parts of when they were in school but never got around to finishing. Its burdened ethical tone makes readers feel vaguely guilty, a terrible fate for any piece of writing. Yet "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men" is a book of wonders—an untamable American classic in the same line as "Leaves of Grass" and "Moby-Dick," a book whose failures of measure and common sense are necessary to its peculiar kind of success.



Agee at home in New York, in 1945. Photograph by Helen Levitt.

LAURENCE MILLER GALLERY

"Agee is a genius—our only genius." So spoke "a woman writer of decided opinions," F. W. Dupee, the Columbia English professor and critic, recalled in an appreciation of Agee written in 1957, two years after the writer's death. The opinionated lady was almost certainly Mary McCarthy, no easy dispenser of laurels. But tributes to Agee's talents had been commonplace since he was a boy. Born into a middle-class family in Knoxville in 1909, he was an erratic student but a much appreciated poet and fiction writer at St. Andrew's school, near Sewanee, at Phillips Exeter Academy, and then at Harvard, where he edited the literary magazine, *The Advocate*. Agee's stepfather paid his tuition and sent him a check now and then, but at Harvard, then still a place for the wealthy and the wellborn, he was one of the poorer boys. Agee was grateful when his friend Dwight Macdonald, a writer at *Fortune*, got him a job there, in 1932, and he quickly joined the literary-journalistic life of New York, living modestly in walkup apartments in the Village and in Brooklyn, and in small houses in New Jersey, for most of the rest of his life. At Time Inc., he became famous for his writing, his drinking, his good and bad temper, and for such bits of heroic foolishness as listening to Beethoven's Seventh Symphony in his office at peak volume, with his ear pressed against the phonograph's speaker. He became a book reviewer at *Time* in 1939, and then, in late 1941, moved over to the movie section; the following year, he took the film critic's job at *The Nation* as well. He wrote for both magazines until 1948, and then worked as a screenwriter—for John Huston on "The African Queen" (1951) and for Charles Laughton on "The Night of the Hunter" (1955), although Laughton heavily revised that screenplay. He composed the narration for documentary films and wrote for CBS's "Omnibus," the class-act TV show of the early fifties. He was working on many projects, literary and cinematic, when he died, in 1955, of a heart attack, in a New York City taxi. He was forty-five years old.

In the decades after his death, appreciations like Dupee's became a flourishing literary genre. Macdonald wrote a harshly loving portrait in this magazine, in 1957; the poet and translator Robert Fitzgerald, a colleague and friend of Agee's at *Time*, wrote a complex but entirely loving one in 1969. Walker Evans, in an edition of "Famous Men" issued in 1960, and, much later, Alfred Kazin, in his memoir "New York Jew," composed emotionally resonant sketches, and there were many others. All these portraits might be called elegies for a fallen Adonis. They speak of physical beauty and lavish gifts—of Agee's large hands shaping the air as he talked, of his ardor and generosity, of the inexhaustible vivacity of his mind. And they mourn the waste of those gifts, the books conceived of and then dissipated in bouts of drinking and conversation that lasted until dawn. Macdonald complains of "the worst set of work habits in the Village," a judgment that was corroborated by Laurence Bergreen in his biography of Agee, which came out in 1984. Macdonald sums up: "I had always thought of Agee as the most broadly gifted writer of my generation, the one who, if anyone, might someday do major work. He didn't do it, or not much of it." A later sympathetic critic—Clive James, writing in 1972—lamented "the absence of that sequence of novels which might have recollected his life—a sequence for the writing of which he had qualifications rivalling Proust's."

Looking for the cause of Agee's alleged failure, James seizes on his long years at Time Inc., and Macdonald, shaking his head, records that Agee believed *Time's* founder, Henry Luce, when he repeatedly promised Agee that he could write seriously for the magazines. "What a waste, what pathetic docility, what illusions!" Macdonald concludes. But in 1949 Agee, working for *Life* this time, composed a celebration of silent comedy, "Comedy's Greatest Era," which is one of the best pieces about movies ever written in this country. From the vantage point of 2006, the repeated laments for Agee's squandered promise no longer look persuasive. Cradling his bottle as he talked to strangers through the night on Perry Street, Agee obviously wasted time. But since he was always castigating himself for his bad habits, isn't it possible that his disappointed friends and later critics, without intending any malice, took his frequently expressed anguish as license to patronize what he actually achieved? This mode of dealing with the writer was recently extended into sheer hostility by John Leonard. Writing in the *Times*, Leonard used the occasion of Agee's appearance in the Library of America as an opportunity not to write an estimate of his virtues and vices as an author but to rehearse the familiar spectacle of his disorderly personal life and the negligent state of his clothes and hygiene.

In both the loving and the hostile portraits, Agee has all too easily been amalgamated into the fable of the Young Man Who Had It All and Threw It Away. There is F. Scott Fitzgerald, there is Thomas Wolfe, there is, concurrently with Agee, the carousing and fornicating Welshman Dylan Thomas—men who drank too much and died too young. But who knows if these writers could have accomplished any more than what they did accomplish? Or if their bad habits didn't, in some way, ease their torments and make the early good work possible? Why not concentrate on what the writer did rather than on what he failed to do? Reading Bergreen, with his account of Agee's alternating states of euphoria and despair, one can see the outlines of what a later age would call a manic-depressive temperament, medicated in a way then considered appropriate for a man of Agee's background—with cigarettes, alcohol, and sex. Since Agee successfully dramatized euphoria and despair in his best work, in the form of idealizing hope and lacerating anger, one could say that his genius was inseparable from his neuroses, and let it go at that.

In any case, the ground of Agee's supposed martyrdom now looks like the springboard of his originality and accomplishment. He would very likely never have gone to Alabama if *Fortune* hadn't sent him there, and what he wrote, in the event, turned into a de-facto rejection of the kind of sober social reporting that the magazine's writers—Agee among them (Sragow includes a

A POETRY READING AT BENEDICTINE COLLEGE IN ATCHISON, KANSAS

We moved the poetry reading to the Exercise Room
For coziness. There we shifted a large bike to the side.
A certain exhilaration entered the room
When the words all agreed to point in one direction.

They say that Lewis and Clark's gang one night
Slept over there by the river, and Amelia Earhart
Lived till she was twelve in that gray house.
Maybe we could all do something brave if we tried.

We, even the heaviest, started to float when we
Remembered the sound of a moth on a screen
Trying to get out. Our lives might change today!
Listening with Sister Faith in the Exercise Room.

—*Robert Bly*

few examples)—were then doing. Time Inc. provided a similar inadvertent lift for the film-review work. As an anonymous movie critic at *Time* (articles in the magazine were then unsigned), Agee did a terrific job summarizing plots and themes, grade-sheeting performances, highlighting directorial touches. He had an easy way with actors and actresses, and wrote sprightly, fact-filled profiles of Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck. He worked with enormous skill, displaying flashes of mischief and eloquence that took the columns out of the ordinary.

What those of us who know Agee's criticism almost by heart read over and over, however, is the reviews that appeared in *The Nation*. Some of them are no more than a few sentences or a phrase. (A movie called "You Were Meant for Me" was reviewed with the words "That's what you think.") In many other pieces, Agee, having done the basics in *Time*, would offer just a line or two of plot or setting, and then take off, using his space to evoke the movie physically. (In "Meet Me in St. Louis," a mother and four daughters, "all in festal, cake-frosting white, stroll across their lawn in spring sunlight, so properly photographed that the dresses all but become halations.") He would describe a movie as a revelation of the American soul, or comment on some issue of dramatic form, or vex himself over the problem of giving reality its due—his old obsession from "Famous Men," now transferred, paradoxically, to a photographic medium attracted to illusion. In his six years on the job, he was roused by the moral daring of Chaplin's "Monsieur Verdoux," by Jean Vigo's poetic masterpieces, by Carl Dreyer's gravity, and by Laurence Olivier's soaring rhetoric and flights of arrows in "Henry V." But he saved some of his most detailed concern and praise for such humble realist forms as newsreels and war documentaries ("With the Marines at Tarawa," John Huston's "Battle of San Pietro," and so on). He believed that the mere photographic record of something, skillfully shot, selected, and arranged, could be tantamount to the greatest art. The *Nation* film criticism was a continuation of the scrupulous and highly moralized attentiveness of "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men."

Having acquitted himself with adroit professionalism at *Time*, Agee was free to unleash his most impassioned eloquence and scorn in the *Nation* pieces. In *Time*, reviewing "Bathing Beauty," one of the ineffable water-tank musicals that Esther Williams made at M-G-M, Agee ends with the mild observation that Williams, "wet and peeled . . . suggests a porpoise amused by its own sex appeal." In *The Nation*, however, he concludes his review:

> I could not resist the wish that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer had topped its aquatic climax—a huge pool full of girls, fountains, and spouts of flame—by suddenly draining the tank and ending the show with the entire company writhing like goldfish on a rug. But M-G-M resisted it.

At *The Nation*, Agee invented the moral rhetoric of film reviewing. At risk was the "grandest prospect for a major popular art since Shakespeare's time." The stage on which this prospect was tested was an industry in which a few "dangerous" individuals with "murderous creative passion" struggled against mediocrity and routine, and often lost. Agee created the myth that almost every critic since his day has drawn on—that the audience, collectively, was pure, and that Hollywood, except for a few people, was timid or corrupt. His friend and rival the critic Manny Farber later complained that Agee, "borrowing words from God, decided whether the latest Hollywood sexpot, in 'Blanche of the Evergreens,' was truthful, human, selfless, decent, noble, pure, honorable, really good, or simply deceitful, a cheat, unclean, and without love or dignity," and Pauline Kael, while acknowledging Agee's powers as a critic, complained of his "excessive virtue," which, she said, "may have been his worst critical vice." But Agee's virtue was shot through with dissidence, foul temper, and comedy. (He ended a grimly knowing review of Billy Wilder's alcoholism drama, "The Lost Weekend," with the following words: "I undershtand that liquor interesh: innerish: intereshtsh are rather worried about thish film. Thash tough.") Farber and Kael missed something in Agee that was foreign to their own temperaments—the intricate and unending play of piety and blasphemy, the twin needs of an essentially religious man to revere and to let loose. One can only blink in wonder at the profanity that Agee got away with, artfully, as in his review of the excruciating "Carnegie Hall," in which, he noted, the conductor Leopold Stokowski, "shot from the floor . . . seems to be undergoing for the public benefit an experience, while conducting a portion of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, which men of coarser clay wish exclusively on women, or perhaps on albums of prefabricated trade-union songs."

The mixture of piety and blasphemy is what makes Agee's fiction so moving, for here is a Christian author of self-

"Say something. I forget what you sound like."

punishing temperament who, at the same time, was awed by creation and could not allow a single aspect of sensuous experience to go unadmired—which meant, necessarily, loving what was raw and degraded as much as what was seemly and fine. In "The Morning Watch," an autobiographical novella of 1951, a twelve-year-old boarding-school boy, asleep in the early morning of Good Friday, dreams that he is Jesus about to be betrayed by his disciples. He awakes, and hears not Peter and Judas but sleepy boys cursing all around him. He goes to chapel and there, on his knees, relives the previous months of religious crisis, during which he tormented himself over masturbation, only to realize that, at that moment, his back and thighs hurting as he kneels, he is committing the sin of imitating Jesus' suffering. He leaves chapel with his friends and, as they go skinny-dipping at dawn, steals a look at their genitals; then, at the side of the pond, he kills a snake that may be poisonous and feeds it to the school's hogs. The mood swings back and forth between guilty devotion to Jesus and excited apprehension of the physical world. As the school enters Easter weekend, and Christ's resurrection approaches, the boy eases into his sexual future.

In Agee's autobiographical novel "A Death in the Family," which he was working on when he died, and which was published in 1957, he goes back further into his youth, to when he was six, in Knoxville, and his young father was killed in a freak automobile accident. The tense alternation of reverence and self-assertion is similar to the rhythm of "The Morning Watch." The family, which has heard the news of the death, gathers and talks into the night with the strange exhilaration that accompanies catastrophe. A debate forms between the religious, who see the death as having a mysterious purpose that God will not divulge, and the skeptics, who think that it happened by chance, and is without meaning. The boy, Rufus (Agee's childhood name), is finally told of the accident, and, to our surprise, feels very little except a sense of his own new importance. "My daddy got killed," he tells strangers and schoolmates on the street. Later, shown the corpse in a funeral parlor, he "looked towards his father's face and, seeing the blue-dented chin thrust upward, and the way the flesh was sunken behind the bones of the jaw, first recognized in its specific weight the word, *dead*." For long stretches, as Agee evokes first the comforts of childhood and then its loneliness and bewilderment, the novel reaches a pitch of tenderness that comes within hailing distance of what Joyce achieved in the early pages of "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man."

Agee's lyrical gift set him off from other writers of liberal or radical conviction of the day. At almost exactly the same time that he and Walker Evans were in Alabama, George Orwell was exploring living conditions in coal-mining towns in the North of England, and it's instructive to compare Orwell's remarkable report, "The Road to Wigan Pier," with "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men." Orwell boarded for a while in a little house that took in miners:

> The place was beginning to depress me. It was not only the dirt, the smells and the vile food, but the feeling of stagnant meaningless decay, of having got down into some subterranean place where people go creeping round and round, just like blackbeetles, in an endless muddle of slovened jobs and mean grievances.

So often in Orwell there is a strong sense of the sordid—the scandal of meanness, decay, filth. And he was appalled by sloth and inanition. When, with much greater sympathy, he describes the miners and their wives in Wigan and other towns he typically catches them not "creeping" but moving vigorously—working, washing, cooking, or searching a slag heap for usable coal. Orwell is a chronicler of man as actor, and the second half of his book is a call for action in the form of socialist reform. But Agee chronicles being. He evokes the farmers and their families not just in sleep but at rest, sitting on a porch, or staring shyly and saying nothing. And he was incapable of physical disgust. For him, there is only an endless variety of shapes, textures, and dispositions, none of them beyond redemption in words.

In "Famous Men," Agee is not a political writer but a poetic and metaphysical writer, who wanted to honor reality, and also to abolish it. There is a trap built into his kind of intense receptivity. That a person or a thing is itself and nothing else, and is therefore worthy of notice and celebration, may be the beginning of morality, but it's also the beginning of tragedy. As Agee sits on the porch or alone in a room in one of the houses, he tries to take in, all at once, everything that the family is, everything that exists in the house—for instance, Mrs. Ricketts's dress, which is shaped "like a straight-sided bell, with a little hole at the top for the head to stick through, the cloth slit from the neck to below the breasts and held together if I remember rightly with a small snarl of shoelace." He stares at a pair of coarsely sewn and nailed work boots, or at a tattered doll, or at the worn-through oil cloth on an old table, and is amazed at how much life went into the making and use of that table, amazed by how much life is going on in similar households, unnoticed, unrecorded. The mood is one of Wordsworthian awe and submission, though Agee extended his sympathies to objects—even mass-produced, industrial products—as well as to nature. At the same time, however, he is stunned by how limited the families are. Being so vividly and absolutely themselves, they are unable to be so many other things, and some of the angriest, most eloquent pages of the book are devoted to the deformations wrought on the children by early work and poor schooling. They have been cheated out of the most elementary ways of teaching themselves—and therefore cheated out of pleasure. When they grow up, and become similar to that disdainful couple Agee encountered on a porch, the fierceness of their pride will be created as much by ignorance as by anger. The rhapsodist of things as they are is necessarily caught in a position of infinite regret. That is why the book, for all its celebratory tone, never falls into bathos. No one could confuse the tenant farmers' days with a complete mastering of life.

Agee could do nothing to help the farmers, but at least by making a candid account of his relations with them he could refuse to join their betrayers. After a great many nervous and defiant disclaimers and proclamations, he gets down to business. Copious sections on the farmers' shelter, work, clothing, and education are interrupted, however, by accounts of his shy attempts to make friends and by speculation on the nature of observation and subjectivity, which anticipates many of the theoretical inquiries of the nineteen-eighties. That wasn't the only way Agee leaped forward to the future of writing; after about three hundred pages, he breaks into feverish personal narrative. He hits the road in a car, and experiences the terrible heat of a small Southern town in the summer. He wanders around lusting after a whore, almost gets into a fight with some snickering boys at a lunch counter, and, in general, goes from caring about everything to caring about nothing. In these passages, he anticipates the strategies of self-acknowledgment that became commonplace thirty years later in the work of Hunter S. Thompson and Mailer: the writer is not some impersonal conveyor of data but a fallible instrument of experience, including his own. Settling down again at the Gudgers', he takes off his clothes and attempts to sleep:

> The pillow was hard, thin, and noisy, and smelled as of acid and new blood; the pillowcase seemed to crawl at my cheek. I touched it with my lips; it felt a little as if it would thaw like spun candy. There was an odor something like that of old moist stacks of newspaper. I tried to imagine intercourse in this bed; I managed to imagine it fairly well. I began to feel sharp little piercings and crawlings all along the surface of my body. I was not surprised; I had heard that pine is full of them anyhow.

He walks out of the house naked, stares at the sky, goes back in, covers himself hand and foot against the bedbugs, and tries again. He can't sleep, but knows a rare moment of happiness—the happiness of justification. "My senses were taking in nothing but a deep-night, unmeditatable consciousness of a world which was newly touched and beautiful to me, and I must admit that even in the vermin there was a certain amount of pleasure: and that, exhausted though I now was, it was the eagerness of my senses quite as fully as the bugs and the itching which made it impossible for me to sleep." And there, in his uneasy bed, the Gudgers, as they rose for another day of backbreaking labor, found him—their recording angel, ready to observe and write again. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Get a Life, *by Nadine Gordimer (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $21).* At first, the title of this novel—a glib phrase, usually followed by an exclamation point—seems slightly off-key for Gordimer, a Nobel laureate and an activist. But Gordimer has always found the ominous in the banal. Here she exposes the complacency of politically aware, upper-middle-class whites in post-apartheid South Africa. The central figure is an ecologist who is battling plans for a nuclear reactor when he gets a diagnosis of thyroid cancer; ironically, his treatment leaves him temporarily radioactive. He begins to brood about his marriage to a chipper advertising executive, whom he suddenly sees as a person "who has no need of convictions." Gordimer is more concerned with ideas than with character, and her dense syntax saps feeling from even the most dramatic events. Still, she is capable of the lacerating truth, as when an adulterer muses, "Surely there is a humane principle that lies save if not lives then the good order of life."

The People's Act of Love, *by James Meek (Canongate; $24).* Thrown together in a remote Siberian village during the civil war that followed the Russian Revolution, the leader of a sect of Christian castrates and an escaped convict who aspires to be a terrorist revolutionary play out the fatal logic of, respectively, religious and political extremism. Meek expertly renders each man's devotion to the task of securing paradise on earth, and exposes the unsettling affinity between the devout servant of God and the cold, calculating murderer. The higher purpose assumed by Meek's tormented believers is mocked by the novel's subsidiary characters, a lusty village woman and the Jewish lieutenant of an occupying Czech legion. These two are too deeply in love with their fallen world to make "blood sacrifices for things they can't know, like God, or the people."

A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York, *by Tony Michels (Harvard; $27.95).* In November, 1917, New York's Jewish working class elected a slew of Socialist Party officials, including seven aldermen, ten state assemblymen, and a municipal judge. Huge crowds gathered around "Trotsky Square" (the corner of 110th Street and Fifth Avenue) to celebrate. This informative, though at times dry, account traces the Jewish Socialist movement from its beginning, after the Russian pogroms of the eighteen-eighties, through its height, when revolutionaries like the German anarchist Johann Most made speeches on Lower East Side street corners, to its decline, a result of immigration quotas, the popularity of F.D.R., and the anti-Semitism accompanying the Red Scare. Michels points out that many of New York's atypical socially democratic features, like the coöperative-housing movement, were initiated by these practical revolutionaries, who were always ready to forsake orthodoxy for measurable gains in the working-class standard of living.

Two Lives, *by Vikram Seth (HarperCollins; $27.95).* Equally at home producing a novel in sonnets or a cornucopian family saga, Seth has few equals as a literary technician. Here he turns to the story of Shanti and Henny, a great-uncle and great-aunt with whom he lived for a time in England. Shanti, an Indian dentist who did some training in Germany, lost an arm while serving in a British Army dental unit during the Second World War. His wife was a German Jew who fled to England in 1939, and whose mother and sister perished in concentration camps. The book is less dazzling than its predecessors, but this seems deliberate, as if Seth had adopted the mantle of dutiful family archivist a little too successfully. Nonetheless, his quiet tone has cumulative power as it leads us back in time from suburban calm to the death chambers of Birkenau.

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THE ART WORLD

ANIMAL ATTRACTION

A Rousseau retrospective.

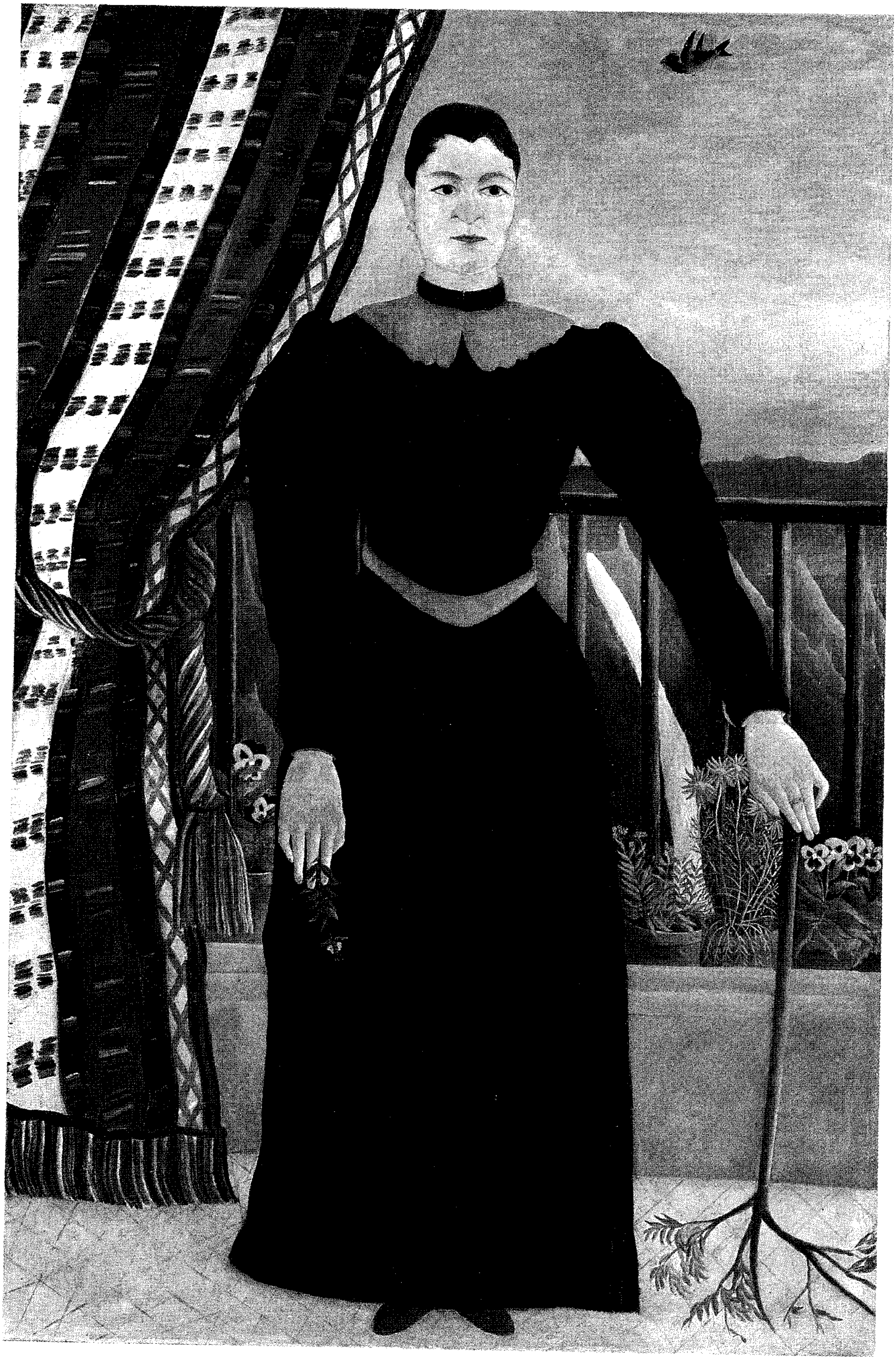
BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

Rousseau in his studio, in 1904, and, opposite, "Portrait of a Woman," 1895.

CORBIS; OPPOSITE: RÉUNION DES MUSÉES NATIONAUX/ART RESOURCE

"The hungry lion throws itself on the antelope, devours him. . . . Birds of prey have each torn a strip of flesh from the poor animal that is shedding a tear! The sun sets." So wrote Henri Rousseau (1844-1910) of his large painting "The Hungry Lion Throws Itself on the Antelope" (1905), which appears in a terrific, unexpectedly challenging retrospective of the beloved customs clerk's art, subtitled "Jungles in Paris," at the Tate Modern, in London. (The show will travel to Paris and Washington.) The said sun, an enormous orange ball, peeks through fantastic but fastidiously tidy foliage. The sorrowful antelope has a head like a duck. The lion's biting teeth are as pearly and uniform as Park Avenue orthodontia. Calmly perched birds, including a polka-dotted owl, already dangle scraps of meat, though the lion's attack has just begun. In a tree, a spotted panther "awaits the moment that he too can claim his share," staring out with frantic eyes. That's plain enough. But a big black hairy beast skulking in the bush—a bird-beaked gorilla?—tilts the scene into numbing preposterousness, garnished with the artist's signature in outsized, galumphing script. Then you may notice how lovely the painting is, with its loamy greens and sturdy blacks against a winking, inexplicable ground of whites and baby blue, topped off with roseate puffs of cloud. The dark-over-light layering, which visually pushes back what's in front and pulls forward what's behind, generates rough decorative unity, suggesting rumpled, seething wallpaper.

Rousseau is strange again, for reasons old and new. The Tate show spruces up familiar conundrums of a very good very bad painter whose achievements are canonical in most histories of modern art. It is no longer much wonder, though it is still significant, that art's lurches into scientific-minded innovation, at the start of the twentieth century, were attended by simultaneous plunges into the "primitive," variously conceived. The double focus evinced a preference for extremes over anything middling. "Bourgeois," as a studio slur, targeted the latter predilection more than an



economic or a political class. One despised banality was showy manual skill. The Paris avant-garde's only partly facetious embrace of Rousseau, backed by Picasso and promoted by Guillaume Apollinaire, was the climax of its trashing of academic qualifications which had begun in the eighteen-eighties, when Paul Gauguin, in his thirties, abandoned a job in the stock market to devote himself to painting. Unlike the sophisticate Gauguin, the man-of-the-people Rousseau, who became an artist in his early forties, had next to no grasp of conventional pictorial craft; he didn't know the rules well enough to break them. For the avant-gardists, his clumsiness lent hilarious glory to his passionate ambition to rival Salon stars like Gérôme and Bouguereau at their own games of history painting, exotic landscape, and swanky portraiture. As it turned out, the more grandiose and pretentious Rousseau's paintings get, the stronger and more delightful they are. His more modest efforts merely charm. (Dauby, twee little Paris views soon wear out their welcome in the show.) Greatness and a travesty of greatness are one thing, in the case of Rousseau. Imagination has less to do with his talent than is generally supposed, as the Tate proves by abundantly documenting the painter's sources in popular mediums of the time, including magazine illustration and taxidermy. Overly associated with the later rise of Surrealism, Rousseau now emerges as more a virtual collagist of existing images than a visionary, and even as a proto-Pop artist.

Rousseau was the fairly well-educated son of an ironmonger in Laval. An act of petty theft in 1863, when he was nineteen, lost him his job as an attorney's scribe and cost him a month in jail. He then spent several years in the Army, never leaving France. His claim, made much of by Apollinaire, to have served in Mexico was false (as he would admit when pressed); the greenhouses of Paris's Jardin des Plantes, with its well-stocked, squalid zoo, were the closest he came to an actual jungle. In 1871, he became a customs clerk, stationed on the outskirts of Paris. He married twice. Both wives died, as did eight of his nine children before reaching adulthood, without appreciable effect on his unsinkably ebullient self-absorption. He began showing in 1886 in the annual Salon des Indépendants, which accepted all fee-paying entrants. He made a splash in 1891 with the startlingly beautiful "Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised!)," his first, and for some years only, jungle picture. The public attention he received was mostly derisive, but it grew. He retired on a small pension in 1893 to paint full time. In his tiny studio, he hosted regular soirées, at which he played the violin. His first avant-gardist champion was the playwright of "Ubu Roi," Alfred Jarry, also from Laval, who nicknamed him Le Douanier and noted, in the artist's stupefying tour de force "War" (1894), "the black leaves that populate the purple clouds; the ruins, tumbling like pine cones among the corpses, translucent with lack of oxygen, littered with pale-beaked crows." Rousseau was blessed in his critics.

His larcenous streak resurfaced in 1907, when he was arrested for participation in a bank fraud. He escaped major punishment partly by showing his paintings in court as evidence of his hapless naïveté. (Was he dumb, or dumb like a fox? It's unclear.) In 1908, perhaps to celebrate his acquittal, as well as Picasso's proud purchase of his "Portrait of a Woman" (1895) from a secondhand store—for five francs—his friends threw a party for him in Picasso's studio at the Bateau Lavoir which became legend. Apollinaire declaimed, "These wines that in your honor Picasso pours, / Let's drink them then, since it's the hour for drinking, / Crying in unison: 'Long live! Long live Rousseau!' " Picasso later took superb photographs of Rousseau, including a double exposure of the artist in his studio and his painting "Monkeys in the Jungle" (1910): a balding, mustachioed fellow in a forest primeval of the mind. (The picture's evocation of "spirit photography" was apt for Rousseau, who fervently believed in ghosts.) Picasso called "Portrait of a Woman" "one of the most truthful French psychological portraits." That judgment may have been sly—the woman looks to be something of a battle-axe—but the composition is majestic, and Picasso never parted with it. Rousseau died in 1910, of gangrene, from an untreated leg wound, and was buried in a pauper's grave, an affront corrected by Picasso and Robert Delaunay, who financed a decent tomb with an epitaph by Apollinaire that reads, in part:

> Let our luggage pass duty free through the gates of heaven
> We will bring you brushes paints and canvas
> That you may spend your sacred leisure in the light of truth.

The finely grained sentimentality of those lines, lightly brushed with mockery, epitomize the intellectual audacity of the Cubist-era Paris avant-garde, whose elevation of Rousseau was a joke for the ages.

A grosser sentimentality has long since come to envelop Rousseau, normalizing his eccentricity as a sanctified symbol of demotic and childlike creativity. A thousand rote imputations of "mystery" to the Museum of Modern Art's "The Dream" (a nude on a chaise, plunked in a jungle) and "The Sleeping Gypsy" (a man a-snooze on a dune, being nosed by a lion) have obscured the priceless silliness of those images. Rousseau's work may never recover its original, wacky tang after generations of culture-climbing parents have seized on it, desperately, to interest their restless progeny in something, anything, modernly arty. I don't ignore the fact that many of us, as kids, really did respond to him, but likely with confusion and then wariness at having our expressed pleasure promptly, smarmily congratulated. Overeducation has diminished our capacity to see Rousseau's work as freakish, not to mention a mite creepy, and thus to gauge his service to the Paris avant-garde's violent assault on tradition. He could hardly have known what hit him, as his praises were sung that evening at the Bateau Lavoir; but I think he had an inkling. His celebrated remark to Picasso on that occasion—"We are the two greatest painters of this era: you in the Egyptian style and I in the modern style"—isn't only funny. It points to a true perception. The world of ordinary people that Rousseau knew had been invaded by a fabulous tribe whose chief painted hieroglyphs. The aliens liked him, and he was bound to like them back. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

GAME PLAYING

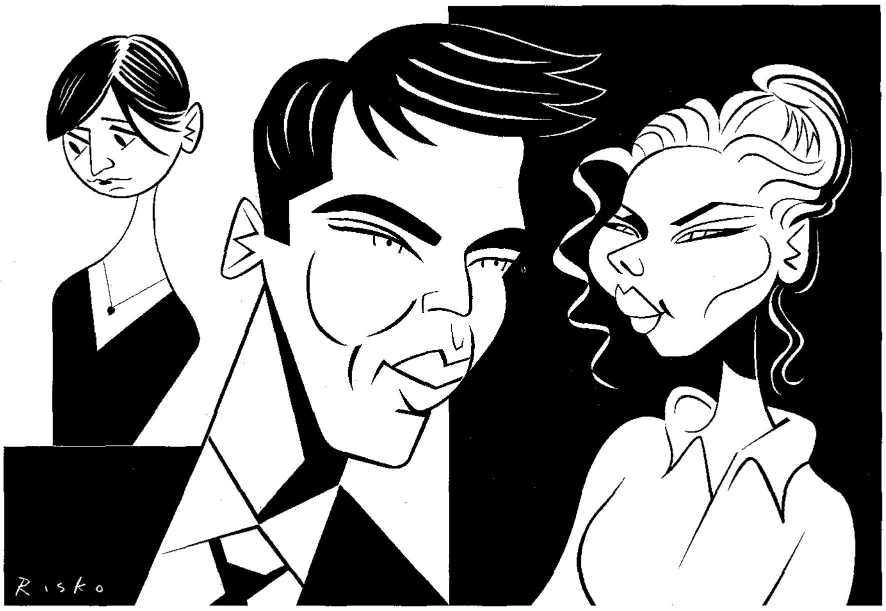
"Match Point," "Casanova," and "The Matador."

BY DAVID DENBY

You could say that Woody Allen, by shifting his milieu from New York's Upper East Side to London's elegant Belgravia, has not so much reinvented himself (as some have suggested) as gone back to the motherland of the Wasp good taste he's always aspired to. But there's no need to be rude. Whatever Allen's needs or motives, a change of light and scenery was obviously good for him. His new movie, "Match Point," devoted to lust, adultery, and murder, is the most vigorous thing he's done in years. The beginning, however, is lame: we're introduced to an Irish-born tennis pro, Chris Wilton (Jonathan Rhys Meyers), a very good player—he played Andre Agassi a couple of times—who is now teaching at a posh London club, where he meets Tom Hewett (Matthew Goode), the lanky, easygoing son of a wealthy family. Tom takes a shine to Chris, who comes from a poor background but has upwardly mobile tastes—he loves opera—and introduces him to his friends and relatives, including his sister, Chloe (Emily Mortimer). In the family box at Covent Garden, Chloe keeps shifting her gaze from "La Traviata" to the handsome young tennis player sitting behind her. Chris's visit to the Hewett country estate follows soon after.

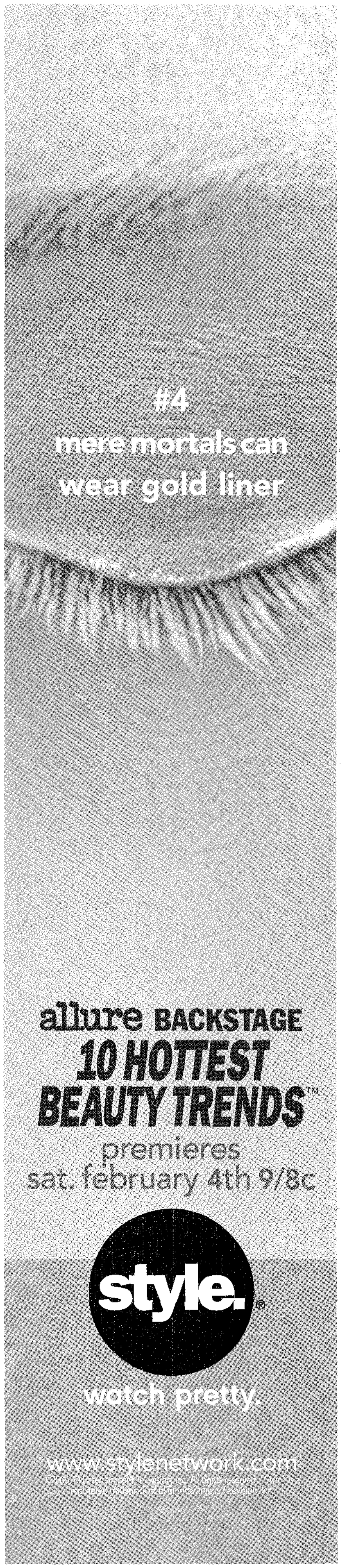
The trouble with these scenes is that they feel falsely debonair. The twitty rhythms and studied languor of Tom's idiom ("I've got some serious cocktails to start making") and the good-hearted effusions of Chloe, who is described as "frighteningly bright" but comes off as vapid, sound more like the small talk in a drawing-room comedy from 1956 than like the London of today. And, at first, Allen's dramatic construction is more opportunistic than convincing: Chloe falls instantly and irreversibly in love with Chris, and her father (Brian Cox), some sort of corporate tycoon, takes Chris into his business without any hesitation. Can the English upper class really be this unguarded? At the firm, Chris rises like a moon shot, though we never find out what the business does or what *he* does, except dress beautifully, get driven around town in a company Jag, and talk on the phone. The movie is framed by a philosophical meditation on the importance of luck, but it's Allen's script, not luck, that sends Chris so rapidly into the stratosphere.

In these early glimpses of the Hewett circle, there's another guest—Nola Rice (Scarlett Johansson), a young American actress of no particular talent but overwhelming allure, who is Tom's fiancée. Nola and Chris impudently flirt when they first meet; later, they bump into each other on the street and go to a bar, and, at that moment, the movie takes off. The two great-looking outsiders are perfectly matched. The slender Irish actor Jonathan Rhys Meyers (from "Bend It Like Beckham") has widely spaced blue eyes, slightly flaring nostrils, and a flattened upper lip—he can look pensive or brutally calculating at will. Chris, as Rhys Meyers plays him, has perfect manners joined to rather frightening sang-froid. He's avid, as Tony Curtis used to say—avid for love, for money, for everything—and he doesn't care who notices it. Scarlett Johansson wears her blond hair up, which brings out the oval shape of her face and the soft beauty of her features, and she, too, has an unusual upper lip, curved and fleshy, and a low, smoky voice. Allen cuts back and forth between closeups of these two; the technique couldn't be more straightforward, but it's richly suggestive. Nola is lost and hanging on to Tom—she has the neurotic vulnerability that has always appealed to Allen, though she's more openly sexual than his past heroines. She views Chris with amusement as a successful interloper, and advises him not to blow it by making a pass. But he sees her as a prize that is just as available to him as to Tom. He marries the chattering heiress Chloe, but he pursues Nola, and the mutual fascination that was so powerful in the bar feeds into the most passionate and explicitly erotic love scenes that Allen has ever directed. Despite all the complaints about sex in the movies, there isn't that much of it, and almost none that



Three's a crowd: Emily Mortimer, Jonathan Rhys Meyers, and Scarlett Johansson.

ROBERT RISKO



is convincing. In this movie, lust carries everything before it—at least for a while. We are warned of trouble ahead by the music that Allen has chosen to accompany the love scenes—Enrico Caruso, at his most tender and ardent, singing arias from Italian opera, the genre of art that insists that sexual passion leads to violence.

The small talk drops away, the emotional temperature rises, and the directness and speed of the movie now feel right. And a certain cruelty, which has always been lodged in the underside of Allen's sense of character, comes out. Given the stakes in money and power, that feels right, too. Chloe wants a child, and turns herself into a fertility laboratory—consulting doctors and setting hours for Chris to make love to her. But he's already bored, and when Nola, whom he loves, gets pregnant, he has got one woman too many on his hands. In outline, the situation resembles that of Dreiser's "An American Tragedy" (and its movie version, "A Place in the Sun"), in which a poor boy irresistibly drawn to a rich girl and all the pleasant luxuries that come with her manages to get his impoverished girlfriend pregnant. The issue for Chris comes down to this: what's more important, love or money?

The way he "solves" his problem—by murdering one of the women—seems to have struck a number of the movie's early viewers as unbelievable. After all, they say, this is modern life, and these things can be worked out. But intelligent people do occasionally commit murder, and not just in fictions concocted by Patricia Highsmith or P. D. James. If "Match Point" gives offense, the real reason, I suspect, is not that it's implausible but that it forces us into complicity with a killer. Filmmakers understand the laws of narrative all too well: an audience, properly hooked by point-of-view shooting, will root for a bank robber or a murderer to get away with whatever he's doing. Chris Wilton lies to everyone, grows more and more desperate, and, as he plans and pulls off a terrible crime, we are with him at every step. In the end, Allen returns to the role of luck and to an old obsession from "Crimes and Misdemeanors"—the question of whether there is any justice in the universe. But the abstract talk is just window dressing. "Match Point" is, at its core, the latest version of a story that has served as a bedrock of fiction for almost two hundred years: a young man from the provinces storms the big city with boldness and sexual charm and then gets in trouble. And we're left, as always, identifying with his desire and regretting its consequences—which means, willy-nilly, chastening our own desire, too.

I fell into a stupor somewhere in the middle of the whirling, nonsensical "Casanova," and roused myself to full attention only at the conclusion, when a list of credits rolled on forever. The credits identify, along with a great many other people, some eight dressing assistants, four wardrobe tailors, twenty-four hair stylists, a pig trainer, and, of course, Dominique "Didi" de Langes, the second-unit manager, who must have had a hand in manipulating the vast throngs assembled in Venice's Piazza San Marco, though perhaps not the digital supernumeraries I detected along the edges. Fully alert, I discovered that Matthew W. Mungle is listed as the prosthetics designer for Oliver Platt (playing Paprizzio, the "lard king" of Genoa), and is therefore one of the criminals who added extra girth, protuberant teeth, and crimson dermatological eruptions to Platt's appearance, making him all but unbearable to look at. What are producers running in a movie like this, an employment agency? I guess some people go to the cinema just to see crowd scenes and costumes, and they may be happy at "Casanova," which, starring Heath Ledger and directed by Lasse Hallström, offers a little bit of the great man's life, whipped into fiction, and many gorgeous views of Venice. I admit that the picture is handsomely designed in gold and pale blue, but none of the tumult and pomp have any dramatic, comic, or erotic effect whatsoever.

The plot is one of those feverish mistaken-identity things, with people giving false names and falling in love with the wrong person, and women dressed as men appearing in a law court, and so forth. Mozart, working with Lorenzo da Ponte, employed a story this daft in "Così Fan Tutte," but he put real feelings into the contrived situations, and his characters stand on a stage and sing a little. In "Casanova" the comedy depends on such things as palpitating ladies bursting out of their dresses, and on Jeremy Irons, as a bishop dispatched from Rome, sucking in his already hollow cheeks as he quivers with rage against "fornication." The movie is sex-obsessed rather than sexual, a paradise for corset-makers and a purgatory for almost everyone else.

Yet there is humor in Heath Ledger's performance. After his powerful work in "Brokeback Mountain," in which he plays a man all tied up inside himself, it was fun to see him leaping out of bedroom windows and prancing around, sword in hand. His Casanova is seductive yet reserved, and Ledger's extraordinary baritone voice, which registers clearly at the lowest volume, may be the best asset any actor has had in years. Assailed in court for dallying with a novice in a nunnery, he says, sotto voce, "She was hardly a novice," a line of no great wit that Ledger turns into elegance by seeming to utter it as a form of self-amusement. The movie's central conceit—that the world's most famous lover loses his heart to a battling Venetian feminist—is a little hard to take, but the lady in question is played by Sienna Miller, who has a volatile, fast-moving body and genuine fire in her eyes. When the credits were over at last, I sighed, and took away a moviegoer's fantasy of Ledger and Miller starting work again, far away from Venice and ball gowns, on something that might be worth seeing.

In Richard Shepard's "The Matador," a sleazy professional hit man (Pierce Brosnan), lonely and self-disgusted, shares a few drinks with a married working stiff (Greg Kinnear) in a Mexico City hotel bar. Shepard, a TV and indie-film veteran, is good at casual meetings and the dynamics of social loathing—when the assassin, eager to impress the square, discusses what he does for a living, the married man is appalled by his cynicism and his violence, but he's also turned on by it. As an uneasy bond forms between the two men, "The Matador" teeters between comedy and moral inquiry but doesn't quite make it either way. The movie features a startling performance, however, by Pierce Brosnan. Wearing a scraggly mustache, unshaven, a little out of shape, a fellow who laughs at his own sour jokes, Brosnan suggests the dark-shadowed side of all those swank men of the world he has played for the past twenty years. We seem to be seeing a glamorous movie star in a cracked, filthy mirror, and, for us, as for Kinnear's regular guy, it's a bruising encounter. ♦

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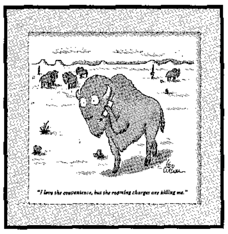
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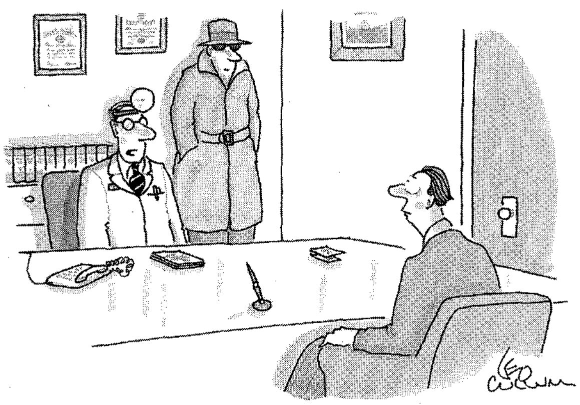
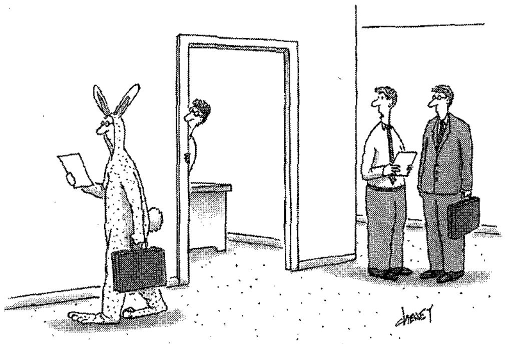
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Michael Maslin, must be received by Sunday, January 8th. Finalists in the December 19th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the January 23rd & 30th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"Instead of an expensive, invasive procedure, we've decided to beat it out of you."
Michael Lichter, Brooklyn, N.Y.



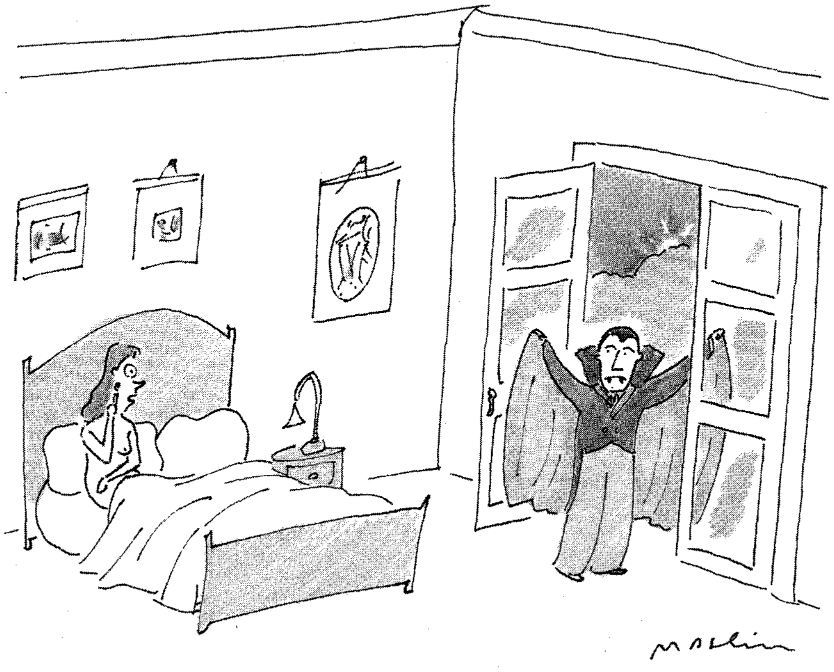
THE FINALISTS

"Well, at least somebody remembered about casual Good Friday."
Tobin von der Nuell, Longmont, Colo.

"It's not just Henderson. Corporate laid off the entire bunny division."
Karen Dakich, Livingston, N.J.

"Well, there he goes—the first casualty of the War on Easter."
Jon Protas, Sunnyside, N.Y.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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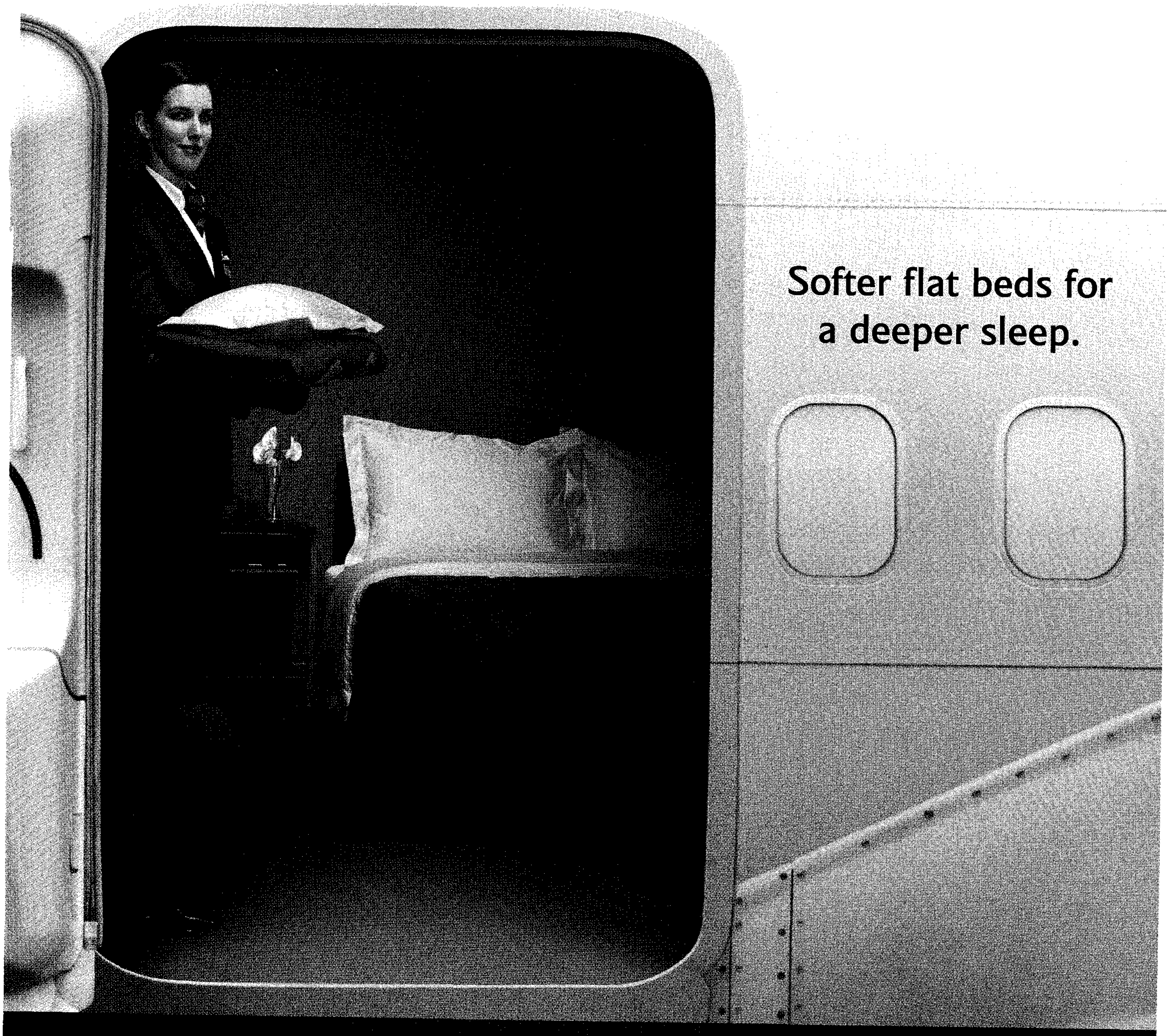

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